FORGERY
and
COUNTERFORGERY

The Use of Literary Deceit
In Early Christian Polemics

BART D. EHRMAN

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I became seriously interested in questions of literary forgery just over twenty years ago in the course of doing research for my book *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*. It occurred to me at the time that the scribal falsification of texts is in many ways analogous to the forgery of texts. In both instances a writer (whether a scribe or an author) places his own words under the authority of someone else. Moreover, both practices were widely discussed and condemned in antiquity. To pursue the matter, I devoured Wolfgang Speyer's seminal treatment, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum*, a great book to which I have returned on a number of occasions in the two decades since. My debt to Speyer will be seen in the opening chapters of this book. It will be clear, however, that my study is altogether different, as I focus on the use of forgery in Christian polemics of the first four centuries.

Abbreviations are standard ones in the field; see, e.g., Patrick H. Alexander et al., *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), pp. 89–153.

There remains the happy occasion to thank those who have helped me in my work. As always, I am endlessly grateful to and for my wife, Sarah Beck-with, a remarkable human being, scholar, and dialogue partner, without whom my work, not to mention my life, would be immeasurably impoverished. My thanks to the National Humanities Center, which awarded me a fellowship in 2009–10, allowing me to pursue this academic passion without interruption, in the daily company of other scholars pursuing theirs. My thanks to my brother, Radd Ehrman, professor of Classics at Kent State University, for occasional help on matters of Greek and Latin literature and culture. My thanks to members of the UNC-Duke "Christianity in Antiquity" reading group (CIA), and members of the Duke-UNC "Late Ancient Studies Reading Group," for vigorously discussing sundry aspects of the work. My thanks to Elizabeth Clark, friend and colleague in the Duke Department of Religion, and to Zlatko Pleše, friend and colleague at UNC, for incisive comments and invaluable assistance on several of the chapters.

Early in my work I had the benefit of two bright and hard-working graduate students at UNC serving as my research assistants, Jared Anderson and Benjamin White. For the past three years, a massive amount of work has been undertaken with inordinate skill by Jason Combs, also a graduate student at UNC. Without his assistance, this book would have taken decades longer to

write and contained thousands more errors. In the final stages, Maria Doerfler, graduate student at Duke, has joined forces and also done extensive and remarkable things, efficiently and with grace. To all of these research assistants I am deeply grateful.

I am especially indebted to three colleagues who read every word of the manuscript and made innumerable corrections and suggestions: Andrew Jacobs at Scribbs College, Joel Marcus at Duke Divinity School, and Dale Martin at Yale University. The world would be a happier place if every author had such friends, colleagues, and readers. All remaining mistakes are, alas, mine.

In the penultimate draft of the book I had determined to leave all foreign language materials cited in isolated and block quotations in their original languages, reasoning that this was, after all, meant to be a work of scholarship. My readers (all of them, actually) insisted that this was a very bad idea. I have yielded to their pleas (in this one instance) and asked the aforementioned Maria Doerfler, her of many languages, to translate the quotations (principally German, but also French and some of the Latin). She has complied in a remarkable way, and I cannot say how much I owe her. In places I have altered her translations, and the final responsibility for their accuracy (or inaccuracy) is all mine. I have resituated the original language quotations themselves to the footnotes. Unless otherwise noted, the translations of Greek texts are mine, including those of the New Testament.

Finally, thanks are due to my close friend and longtime editor Robert Miller at Oxford University Press, who has willingly and eagerly come forth from his normal world of college publishing to take on the task of editing the book.

I have dedicated the book to the memory of two of my former teachers at Princeton Theological Seminary: Bruce M. Metzger and J. Christiaan Beker. Among white, middle-class, New Testament scholars you could not find two more different human beings. But they both influenced me significantly, and they both shared my passion for learning the truth about early Christian literary deceit.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Arguably the most distinctive feature of the early Christian literature is the degree to which it was forged.[1] Even though the early Christians were devoted to the truth–or so their writings consistently claimed—and even though “authoritative” literature played a virtually unparalleled role in their individual and communal lives, the orthonymous output of the early Christians was remarkably, even astonishingly, meager. From the period of the New Testament, from which some thirty writings survive intact or in part, only eight go under the name of their actual author, and seven of these derive from the pen of one man.[2] To express the matter differently, only two authors named themselves correctly in the surviving literature of the first Christian century. All other Christian writings are either anonymous, falsely ascribed (based on an original anonymity or homonymity), or forged.

Matters begin to change with the second Christian century, even though orthonymity continues to be the exception rather than the rule. It is worth considering, for example, what Pre-Enlightenment scholars accepted as the writings of apostolic and subapostolic times.[3] There were the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* of Clement, now known not to be works of the one who was reputedly the fourth bishop of Rome, but to be forged in his name. There were the writings of the early Pauline convert Dionysius the Areopagite, also forged. There were the letters of Paul himself to and from Seneca, likewise forged. And there were the thirteen letters of Ignatius of Antioch, six of them forged and the others falsely and severely interpolated. When we move deeper into the second century and on into the third and fourth, we see a heightened interest in the production of “apostolic” works: Gospels by Peter, Thomas, Philip, all forged; Paul’s letters to the Alexandrians and Laodiceans, forged; Jesus’ correspondence with Abgar, forged; Apocalypses of Peter and Paul, forged. We can move backward into writings forged in the names of the greats from antiquity, Isaiah or the Sybil, or forward into the writings forged in the names of orthodox church fathers—Basil, Augustine, Jerome. The list goes a very long way.

Matching the abundant materials for the study of early Christian forgery is the remarkably sparse attention paid to it—as a broader phenomenon—in modern scholarship. Apart from studies of individual instances, which do indeed abound, and discussions of the relationship of pseudepigrapha to issues of canon, there is

no full length study of the phenomenon in the English language, and only one reasonably comprehensive study in German.[4] There is none in any other language of scholarship.

The study of individual cases is, of course, crucial for the understanding of the broader phenomenon and so need continuously to be carried out with rigor and focus. But somewhat ironically, these examinations are often conducted precisely apart from a knowledge or appreciation of the wider phenomenon of early Christian forgery. Surely an individual instantiation of the practice cannot be studied in isolation, apart from its wider historical and cultural context.

The studies of forgery and canon are also vital in many ways, especially in assisting in the evaluation of the practices of and attitudes toward forgery in the early Christian tradition. Inevitably such studies draw on materials taken from the wider Jewish and pagan environments, often, though not always, with broad coverage and clarity of insight. But a focus on issues of canon can skew the discussion in certain ways, and there are other important questions that need to be addressed.

What are needed are fuller studies of the historical phenomenon, not only in relation to a set of theological concerns and not only with eyes focused on the early Christian forgeries that were eventually deemed to be Scripture. The canonical forgeries participated both in the broader stream of literary practices of antiquity and, more narrowly, in the literary practices of the early Christian communities. These broader practices should not be seen merely as background to the object of ultimate (theological) concern (the question of canon), but should be explored as a matter of intellectual inquiry in their own right. That is the intent and goal of the present study.

The focus of my concern will be the Christian literary forgeries of roughly the first four centuries CE. Later texts will be discussed only when they are in some way compelling, relevant, and especially noteworthy. In particular, for the purposes of this study, I am interested in forgeries that were engendered in the context of early Christian polemics. One could easily argue that these involve the majority of the relevant texts, but that statistical question is of no concern to me here. I am interested in polemics because they played such a major role in the history and development of the early Christian tradition and, as a consequence, in the production of early Christian forgeries. We know of numerous polemical contexts from the early Christian centuries, of course, and I am not restricting my vision to just one of them. Christians engaged in conflicts with non-Christian Jews and with antagonistic pagans; most of the polemical contexts, however, were intramural. There were internecine disputes over legitimate authority and

authority figures. There were arguments over church structure and hierarchy, offices, ritual, and discipline. There were abundant and heated disagreements over specific theological teachings, from early eschatological disputes to later Christological and Trinitarian controversies. In all these contexts unknown authors produced forgeries, in large measure to help secure victory over their opponents through the authority provided by an assumed authorial name. Some of these forgers were remarkably successful in deceiving their reading audiences. Most of the forgeries produced have been lost or destroyed. But a striking number have survived, some through manuscript traditions down through the ages, others by chance discoveries made by professional archaeologists or rummaging fellahin.

We cannot understand these polemical forgeries if we fail to situate them in their context within the deceptive literary practices of the environment, the broader Greco-Roman world, including the part of that world that comprised Judaism. The study needs, then, to be carried out in relationship to that context, and so, in the following four chapters, it will begin by asking a set of questions about the wider phenomenon, seeking what can be known about the intent, function, motivations, and techniques of Greek and Roman forgeries. We will also examine the attitudes toward the practice, toward specific instantiations of it, and toward those who engaged in it: Were they seen to be lying? Were there culturally available justifications for their deceits? We will also evaluate the methods of detection that were employed by ancient critics intent on uncovering forgery.

The rest of the book deals with Christian forgeries of the first four centuries that appear to have been generated in polemical contexts. I discuss some fifty instances. In many cases I evaluate the scholarly debates that the texts have engendered—debates, in particular, over whether or not the text in question is authentic or forged. But there is much more to the matter of forgery than a mere Dass, as recent scholarship on forgery has so valuably stressed.[5] That is to say, knowing *that* a book is forged is crucial, but only as the beginning, not the end, of the investigation. Other—arguably even more important and interesting—questions involve such matters as the motivations and functions of the forgery. Why did an author choose to lie about his identity?[6] What was he trying to accomplish? How did the book he produced achieve his desired ends?

With respect to the first set of questions, whether or not a book is forged, I have taken three approaches in my analysis. Some books continue to be keenly debated among scholars (e.g., 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, James); for these I provide a full discussion of the range of issues that suggest that the book is in

fact forged. Other instances are less open to dispute (e.g., 2 Peter, the Pseudo-Ignatians), and in such cases I will simply state the most compelling reasons that have persuaded the majority of scholars. Yet other instances require no case to be made at all, as they are recognized as forgeries, for compelling reasons, by all hands (e.g., the Gospel of Peter; Jesus' correspondence with Abgar; the Apostolic Constitutions). The ultimate goal of the study is not to determine if this, that, or the other writing is forged, but to examine the motivation and function of forgery, especially in polemical contexts.

In the course of my discussions I will be especially interested in a kind of subcategory of forgery that I am calling "counterforgery" (Gegenfälschung). This term occasionally appears in the scholarship in two senses, which are not usually differentiated cleanly. On one hand, in a most general sense, a counterforgery involves a forged writing that opposes a specific idea, doctrine, point of view, or practice. But that, by the nature of the case, is true of virtually all polemically driven forgeries. And so I also propose a more specific kind of counterforgery, that is, one designed to counter the ideas, doctrines, views, or perspectives found precisely in another forgery (whether or not the author of the counterforgery realized that the book being opposed was forged). The value of this subcategory of polemical forgery will become evident in the discussions of individual cases.

In many instances readers may suspect that the forgeries I consider functioned in ways other than polemical. To anticipate that objection, I should here stress that it is important to recognize the multifunctionality of forgeries, which corresponds to the multifunctionality of all literary texts. Few writings are produced for a solitary reason. If one were to ask why Paul wrote the letter now known as 1 Thessalonians, a number of perfectly valid, but differing, responses could be given. He wrote it in order to resume relations with a community that he had founded and considered particularly dear; he wrote it to bring his apostolic presence into their midst while he was himself physically absent; he wrote it to remind his readers of the redemptive message they had earlier received; he wrote it to clarify the misunderstandings of some of the community concerning the nature of the eschatological gospel he had proclaimed; he wrote it to urge his readers to lead a life of high morality; and he probably wrote it for a handful of other reasons. It would be wrong to insist that he wrote the letter for just one reason, and it would be wrong to deny any one of these being the reason (or one of the reasons) he wrote it.

So too with forgeries in Paul's name, or the names of any of the famous figures from early Christianity. Rarely, if ever, do they fulfill just one purpose or

serve just one function. They may serve several, possibly unrelated to one another. To take one obvious example, the Protevangelium Jacobi. The author calls himself James, and he almost certainly is claiming to be “that” James—the brother of Jesus, who, according to the account itself, would have been the son of Joseph from a previous marriage, that is, Jesus’ older step brother. This, of course, would put him in a particularly strong position to tell the prehistory of Jesus’ appearance in the world, which forms the subject for the bulk of the narrative. But why did the author write the account? In fact, the (forged) work may well have functioned on numerous levels. It may have been written to provide readers an entertaining account of the prehistory of Jesus’ birth and of its immediate aftermath. It may have been produced to celebrate the greatness of the mother of God. More than that, it may have been created in order to answer pagan opponents of Christianity such as Celsus (and the fabricated claims of his “Jew”), by showing that the charges they leveled against Mary (a peasant girl who had to spin for a living), Joseph (a poor common laborer), and the child Jesus (born into poverty) were precisely wrong. But there is more. Against adoptionist Christians the account shows that Jesus was in fact the Son of God from his birth; and against Marcionites it shows that Jesus actually came into the world as a child—that he did not simply descend from heaven, fully grown, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar. The text, in other words, functions on a number of fronts in the proto-orthodox attempt to establish itself and its views in the face of opponents, Jewish, pagan, and heterodox Christian. Was it written to deal with just one set of problems? Possibly so. But it is virtually impossible to say, without having the author available to interview, since features of the account successfully counter the claims of this, that, or the other opponent of the proto-orthodox.

Finally, in view of my ultimate concerns in this study, I should emphasize what I will *not* be addressing here:

I will not be discussing literary texts that have been taken by some scholars to be forgeries but that I consider to be authentic. Thus, for example, I will certainly be dealing with the fourth-century Pseudo-Ignatian letters, but I will not be discussing the seven letters of the Middle Recension, even though there is a history—some of it quite recent—of taking these letters also as forgeries. I do not find the recent arguments of Hübner and Lechner to be any more persuasive than the older arguments by Weijenborg, Joly, and Rius Camps on the matter[7]; I think the seven letters are authentic, and so I will not be discussing them as polemical forgeries.

I will not be examining pseudepigrapha that are not Christian in origin but came to be transmitted, cherished, and sometimes also altered by Christians as part of their literature (e.g., the Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve).[8]

I will not by and large be considering polemical forgeries from after the fourth century (e.g., Pseudo-Titus; the Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea).

I will not be considering forgeries that are not polemical in some obvious way (e.g., the Prayer of the Apostle Paul or a number of other nonpolemical pseudepigrapha of the Nag Hammadi Library).

Conversely, I will not be considering polemical works that are not forgeries (the Nag Hammadi Testimony of Truth, for example, makes no authorial claim).

I will not be considering books that are no longer extant, in full or in part.

I will not, for the most part, be considering falsely attributed books (since their authors made no false authorial claims: so, for example, the New Testament Gospels; the Epistle of Barnabas; Pseudo-Justin; Pseudo-Tertullian; etc.).

I will not, with a few key exceptions in passing (such as the Sibylline Oracles and the Pseudo-Ignatians), be considering the closely related matter of false interpolations (e.g., in the writings of the New Testament).

I will not be considering ancient instances of plagiarism, unless they have something to do with forgeries (e.g., possibly, 2 Peter).

I should stress that the preceding topics are all important and deserve full examination. But in this study, I will be restricting myself to books whose authors appear to make false authorial claims, for polemical purposes, within the Christian tradition of the first four Christian centuries.

Finally, I want to take special care to circumvent a possible misreading of my study, which would think or claim that I am trying to advance some kind of positivist agenda in promoting one kind of Christian thought and its literature over another. When I call a text forged I am making a literary-historical claim about its author; I do not mean to imply any kind of value judgment concerning its content or its merit as a literary text (religious, theological, ethical, personal, or any other kind of merit). In particular, I am not claiming that it is somehow inferior in these ways to a work that is orthonymous. I am not, that is, contrasting later forged texts with texts that are somehow pristine, "original," and therefore better or more worthy of our attention.

Another way to express this caveat is this: my ultimate concerns do not lie (at

least in this study) with theological or ontological questions of ultimate truth, but in historical questions about how Christianity developed as a religion. From a historical perspective—just to take an example—writings that were actually written by Paul were themselves products of their time, based on things Paul heard, experienced, and thought, just as were the writings produced by others in his name. As a historian I do not value the authentically Pauline writings any more or less than later "Pauline" writings that were forged.

1. I will be defining the term *forgery*, and related terms, soon, and justify the way I will be using them. See pp. 29–32. For now it is enough to state my general conception. A "forgery" is a literary work with a false authorial claim, that is, a writing whose author falsely claims to be a(nother) well-known person.

2. I am excluding for now the writings of Ignatius from this tally; were he to be considered—on the grounds that he probably wrote prior to the appearance of 2 Peter—then seven additional works and one additional author would be added to the totals.

3. See further, R. M. Grant, "The Appeal to the Early Fathers," *JTS* 11 (1960): 13–24.

4. Wolfgang Speyer's rightly famous *vade mecum, Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum: Ein Versuch ihrer Deutung* (München: Beck, 1971). It is now, obviously, over forty years old, but nothing has come along to replace or even to supplement it.

5. See especially the recent collection of essays edited by Jörg Frey, Jens Herzer, Martina Janssen, and Clare K. Rothschild, *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*. WUNT 246 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

6. That forgers were consciously lying about their identity in an effort to deceive their readers will be the burden of much of the following four chapters; in particular see pp. 128–32.

7. Thomas Lechner, *Ignatius adversus Valentinianos? Chronologische und theologiegeschichtliche Studien zu den Briefen des Ignatius von Antiochen*, VCSup 47 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); R. M. Hübner, "Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung der sieben Briefe des Ignatius Antiochien," *ZAC* 1 (1997): 44–72; Reinoud Weijenborg, *Les lettres d'Ignace d'Antioche* (Leiden: Brill, 1969); Robert Joly, *Le Dossier d'Ignace d'Antioche*, Université libre de Bruxelles, Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres 69 (Brussels: Éditions de l'université de Bruxelles, 1979); Josep Rius-Camps, *The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1979). For responses, see Caroline Hammond Bammel, "Ignatian Problems," *JTS* n.s. 33 (1982): 66–

97; Mark J. Edwards, “Ignatius and the Second Century: An Answer to R Hübner,” *ZAC* 2 (1998): 214–26; and Andreas Lindemann, “Antwort auf die ‘Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung der sieben Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochien’,” *ZAC* 1 (1997): 185–95.

8. See, for example, M. de Jonge, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature: The Case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). The only exceptions to my rule—e.g., the Sibylline Oracles—involve corpora that include originally Christian productions as well.

PART I

Forgery in the Greco-Roman World

CHAPTER TWO

Forgers, Critics, and Deceived Deceivers

I begin with a series of anecdotes that establish some of the themes pursued throughout the course of my study. These historical narratives involve forgers who condemned forgery and deceivers who were deceived.

HERACLIDES AND DIONYSIUS

Heraclides Ponticus was one of the great literati of the classical age.[1] As a young man from aristocratic roots, he left his native Pontus to study philosophy in Athens under Plato, Speusippus, and eventually, while he was still in the Academy, Aristotle. During one of Plato's absences, Heraclides was temporarily put in charge of the school; after the death of Speusippus he was nearly appointed permanent head. His writings spanned a remarkable range, from ethics to dialectics to geometry to physics to astronomy to music to history to literary criticism. Diogenes Laertius lists more than sixty books in all. Ten more are known from other sources. Few texts remain, almost entirely in fragments.

Diogenes is our principal source of information outside the primary texts.[2] As is his occasional wont, he betrays much greater interest in regaling readers with amusing anecdotes than in describing Heraclides' contributions to the intellectual world of his day.[3] And so we are told that Heraclides' penchant for fine clothing and good food, which produced a noticeably corpulent figure, earning for him the epithet Heraclides Pompicus.

Of particular interest to Diogenes are instances in which Heraclides was involved in conscious deception. At one point, Heraclides had fallen desperately, even, he thought, mortally ill. Concerned for his postmortem reputation, he entrusted a family servant with the ploy. Feigning his death, he arranged for his pet snake to be placed, instead of his (not yet deceased) corpse, under the cover of the funeral bier; at the internment, those attending his funeral would take the appearance of the sacred snake as a sign that Heraclides had been bodily assumed into the realm of the gods. The plot failed, as it turns out; the snake prematurely slithered out from cover during the funeral procession, and it was immediately recognized that the entire proceeding had been a ruse. Heraclides

was discovered, and, in the event, he was destined to live on, with more deceits in store.

This near-death experience is paired, by Diogenes, with an episode that did end Heraclides' life. When the region of Heraclea was suffering a famine, its citizens sent to the priestess at the oracle of Pythia to learn what they were to do in order to regain divine favor. Heraclides bribed the envoys and the oracular priestess herself to publish a fake prophecy: the Heracleans' plight would be resolved when they installed Heraclides as royalty with a golden crown, and vowed to bestow upon him honors worthy of a hero at his death. The citizens took the fabricated oracle to heart, but the falsity of the envoys and priestess was soon uncovered: when Heraclides was crowned as directed in the theater he was struck by a fit of apoplexy and died, thwarted in his desire for posthumous honors. The envoys were stoned to death, and the priestess was later dispatched by a poisonous snake at her shrine.

Even at the height of his career, the Diogenic Heraclides was involved in scandal. His literary treatise dealing with Homer and Hesiod was shown to be a bald plagiarism. And he committed forgery, according to the musician Aristoxenus, who claimed that Heraclides composed tragic plays in the name of Thespis. Richard Bentley was the first to argue that the few surviving fragments of Thespis are in fact Heraclidean inventions.[4]

What Heraclides is best known for, however, is an instance of deceit in which he was the victim rather than the culprit. This involves arguably the most famous instance of mischievous forgery in the history of the practice, Heraclides' deception at the hands of his former student Dionysius (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 5.92–93).

Dionysius Spintharos ("the Spark") earned the epithet Metathemenos, the Renegade, in his old age, after a severe illness effectively disabused him of his lifelong Stoic view that pain, which is morally neutral, cannot therefore be considered evil.[5] According to Diogenes, earlier in life Dionysius played a trick on his former teacher, by forging a play called the *Parthenopaeus* in the name of Sophocles. In one of his works of literary criticism, Heraclides drew on the play, citing it as authentically Sophoclean. But Dionysius then informed him that in fact the play was a forgery, perpetrated by none other than himself. Heraclides refused to believe it, and so Dionysius brought forth evidence: at the opening of the play, the first letters in a group of lines formed an acrostic, "Pankalus," the name of Dionysius' own lover.

Heraclides insisted that the matter was a coincidence, until Dionysius brought forth two additional and yet more convincing proofs. The first was a subsequent

acrostic that said, “An old monkey is not captured by a trap; yes, it is captured, but it is captured after some time.” The final acrostic was irrefutable: Ἡρακλείδης γράμματα οὐκ ἐπίσταται οὐδ᾽ ἠσχύνθη (Heraclides does not know letters, and is not ashamed).[6]

Diogenes’ passage has generated some scholarly discussion. In his edition of the fragments of the philosophers of the Aristotelian school, F. Wehrli gives reasons to think it was not the *Parthenopaeus* that was fabricated, but Diogenes’ anecdote itself.[7] The story may be humorous and clever, but for the acrostics to have worked, Wehrli argues, Dionysius would have had to be relatively certain that Heraclides in particular would be deceived and make a public display of his ignorance.

Wehrli makes a strong point but perhaps is not completely suasive. Two of the three acrostics have no explicit connection to Heraclides; the other could just as easily have been placed in the text to satisfy Dionysius’ rather scandalous sense of humor. If so, Heraclides just happened to step into a trap particularly suited for his corpulent frame.[8]

In any event, this is not the only instance of roguish forgery from the ancient world, designed to bamboozle an intellectual opponent. Galen indicates that Lucian decided to ridicule a much beloved, but unnamed, philosopher whom he considered a braggart and did so by penning an obscure and senseless philosophical treatise in the name of Heraclides. He had it presented to his enemy for an interpretation. When he complied, Lucian turned the tables, mocking him for being unable to see through the swindle.[9]

More to my purpose here, however, is the pure irony of Diogenes’ own Heraclides. In a game of intellectual boomerang, the one who is guilty of swindles, lies, plagiarism, and forgery—in a word, deceit—is himself a victim of deceit. The deceiver is deceived.

THE IRONIES OF THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

This ironic phenomenon has its rough parallels in the later Christian tradition. To begin with, we might look at a work universally recognized as pseudepigraphic, the late-fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions, a “church order” allegedly written by none other than the apostles of Jesus (hence its name) but in reality produced by someone simply claiming to be the apostolic band, living three hundred years after they had been laid to rest in their respective tombs.

We will be considering other aspects of this text in a later chapter.[10] For now it is enough to note that the book represents an edited composite of three earlier

documents still extant independently, the third-century Didascalia Apostolorum, which makes up books 1–6 of the composite text; the Didache, which is found in book 7; and the Apostolic Tradition, wrongly attributed to Hippolytus, in book 8. Since this author has taken over earlier writings without acknowledgment, he could well be considered a plagiarist by ancient, as well as modern, standards. Consider, for example, the words of Vitruvius:

> While, then, these men deserve our gratitude, on the other hand we must censure those who plunder their works and appropriate them to themselves; writers who do not depend upon their own ideas, but in their envy boast of other men's goods whom they have robbed with violence, should not only receive censure but punishment for their impious way of life.[11]

In absolving our unknown compiler of the charge, it might be observed that plagiarism involves an author passing off someone else's work as his own, whereas in the case of the Apostolic Constitutions the author does not claim that *any* of the work is his own. He claims instead that it is the writing of the apostles. Ancient critics would certainly have considered the work a forgery, but it is not clear if they would have considered it a plagiarism.

As to the charge of forgery, it is worth observing that unlike the earliest of the borrowed documents, the Didache, the Apostolic Constitutions does not claim merely to stand in the apostolic tradition or to present a correct understanding of the teachings of the apostles. It claims to be written by the apostles. To this end, although the three earlier "church orders" are taken over more or less wholesale, some important editing has taken place. The Apostolic Constitutions begins by naming its authors as "the apostles and elders."[12] As in the Didascalia, lying behind chapters 1–6, the apostles appear only rarely until toward the end; in 6.8, for example, the author reverts to a first-person plural "we went forth among the gentiles" and then to a first-person discourse in the name of Peter (6.9). The fourteen authors name themselves in 6.14 (the eleven disciples, Matthias the replacement of Judas, James the brother of Jesus, and the apostle Paul); in 6.12 they speak of themselves as the "twelve"—the original eleven and Matthias; elsewhere, on two occasions, Clement is added to the list. Moreover, the authorial fiction is inserted into the source documents at the very beginning of both book 7 ("We also, having followed our teacher Christ … are obliged to say that there are two ways") and book 8 ("Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, delivered to us the great mystery of piety.… These gifts were first given to us the

apostles when we were about to proclaim the gospel").

More remarkably, starting in 8.16, certain directives for church offices are made in the first-person singular: "With respect to the ordination of deacons, I Philip make this constitution.… With respect to a deaconess, I Bartholomew make this constitution.… With respect to the sub-deacons, I Thomas make this constitution.…" And so on, in the names of other apostles. As Bruno Steimer has pointed out, only rarely does the author slip up and betray the pseudepigraphic character of his writing: James, one of the speakers (8.35.1), is said already to be dead (7.46.1–2); Peter both speaks in the first person and is spoken of in the third (7.11, but 2.24.4; 7.2.12); Paul is sometimes not included in the assembly (e.g., 2.55.1); and in one place, at least, Peter and Paul seem to differentiate themselves from the apostles (8.33.8).[13]

It is frequently stated that the Apostolic Constitutions claims as its ultimate author Clement of Rome, who allegedly is writing the words given him by the apostles.[14] This, however, is almost certainly wrong. Clement is not mentioned at the beginning of the book when the author addresses the readers in the names of the apostles, or in the beginning of any of the books' three main sections. He does appear twice in the first person (8.46.13; 8.47.85), and so he has been inserted as a co-author of sorts. But he is not the ultimate writer of the document. The passages that have been appealed to in support of a Clementine authorship are 6.18.11, where "the Catholic doctrine" is said to have been sent διὰ τοῦ συλλειτουργοῦ Κλήμεντος; and again at the end the book at 8.47.85, where the writing is self-referentially said to have been addressed to the bishops δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Κλήμεντος. The book is clearly written "through Clement." But this does not mean that Clement is the one recording the words of the apostles. It means he is being imagined as the one who carried the book to the recipients and who could, then, vouch for both its authenticity, as having been written by the apostles, and its accuracy.[15]

The Apostolic Constitutions, then, tries to pass itself off as an authentically apostolic writing, even though it is not. This is a clear case of what I will later be defining as literary forgery: a writing that makes a false authorial claim, with the apparent intention of deceiving its readers.[16] A range of ironies emerge from this text as a result. One intriguing passage occurs in 8.3, where the author not only stresses his apostolic identity but also draws for his readers the ineluctable conclusion, in case they were too dense to catch it: "the one who hears us hears Christ, and the one who hears Christ hears his God and Father." What would it mean, then, to disobey the apostolic instructions of the book? The reader can draw her own conclusion.

At the same time, this authorial authority, rooted in a direct apostolic line heading straight to God, is rooted in a falsehood. The book is pseudepigraphic—literally, "inscribed with a lie." This makes the claim of apostolic succession all the more interesting, as the claim appears immediately after the author's reminder of how God "rebuked the way of those who … attempted to speak lies" (τῶν ψευδῆ ἐπιχειρούντωνλέγειν . . . ἤλεγξε τὸν τρόπον; 8.3.1). Here a liar condemns the telling of lies.[17]

What is more, as with Heraclides Ponticus, here too the deceiver has been deceived. The alleged authors—the apostles of Christ, including Paul and James—claim that the books of the New Testament were theirs: ἡμέτερα δέ, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστι τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης (8.47.85). And so the author gives a list of which books those are, a list including all the books that eventually became the New Testament, with the exception of the book of Revelation. Strikingly, after listing the Gospels and the letters of Paul, James, John, Jude, and Peter, the author indicates that the New Testament is also to include the two letters of Clement and, to cap it all off, the Apostolic Constitutions themselves. The list ends with "our Acts of the Apostles" αἱ Πράξεις ἡμῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων (8.47.85)—in other words, not just the letters that the authors had earlier produced but also the account of their activities.

By naming 1 and 2 Clement as scriptural authorities—part of "our" New Testament—the alleged authors are establishing the authority of the bearer of their writing, Clement of Rome, companion of the apostles. Including their own writing, the Apostolic Constitutions, as Scripture is the natural corollary of the pseudepigraphic enterprise. If they wrote the other books of the New Testament, then surely their other writing—that is, the present one—is also sacred scripture. This is pseudepigraphy with chutzpah. The author is not just forging an apostolic writing; he is urging, in the name of the apostles, that the writing be deemed part of Scripture.[18] At the same time, to some extent this author is simply making explicit what other forgers clearly desired implicitly. Whoever wrote the extant letter of Laodiceans, the letter of 3 Corinthians, and the Gospel of Peter clearly expected their readers to accept their books as authentically apostolic and thus, surely, in some sense scriptural.

But, as intimated, the author of the Apostolic Constitutions is not only a deceiver; he is also deceived—in this case, about many of the books of the New Testament, which he did not in fact write but which were also, for that matter, not written by the apostolic authorities who are claimed as their authors. In making this mistake, our unknown author can certainly be excused. Virtually all Christians by the end of the fourth century assumed that the New Testament

books were authentic; little did they know that the writings of Paul and the letters of Peter, James, and Jude would all come under criticism so many centuries later. All the same, here again we have a forger who has been fooled by other forgeries.[19]

What is yet more striking is that in two places this self-conscious pseudepigrapher explicitly condemns what he practices, insisting that his readers not read other forgeries. The first passage is in 6.16.1:

> We have sent all these things to you so that you might be able to know what our opinion is. And do not receive the books that have been patched together in our name by the ungodly. For you are not to pay heed to the names of the apostles, but to the nature of the things and to their undistorted opinions.

The author goes on to mention books forged by the false teachers Simon and Cleobius[20] and their followers, who have "compiled poisonous books in the name of Christ and of his disciples," written in order to deceive others. He also speaks of "apocryphal books" written by the ancients, in the names of Moses, Enoch, Adam, Isaiah, David, and so on, that are "pernicious and alien to the truth," and he indicates that other "ill-named" persons have done so as well, writing books that malign the creation, marriage, providence, having children, the Law, and the prophets.

It is true, as J. Mueller has recently observed, that the author is not precisely condemning his own practice; he objects to heretical and apocryphal forgeries specifically because they teach false notions.[21] His own book, in his opinion, teaches the truth, something (for him) quite different. But it is also important to consider the issue in a wider perspective. His opponents—the ones who forged heretical books—would have seen the matter in just the opposite light and no doubt asserted that their views were apostolic whereas his were pernicious and poisonous. It is not up to the historian to adjudicate this theological dispute. Still, it is worth noting that the fact of the author even raising the issue of apostolic pseudepigrapha shows he is fully conscious of the circumstance of authors falsely writing in the name of apostles when he is doing so himself. And so the view of Steimer seems completely justified: "By adding a criterion for determining authenticity to his critique of forgery, the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions avoids submitting his own work to the verdict that he himself has formulated. The criterion for authenticity provides him with a suitable means to polemicize as a forger against forgery."[22]

The second instance is 8.47.60, which condemns in no uncertain terms "anyone who publicly displays the pseudepigraphic books of the impious τὰ ψευδεπίγραφα βιβλία τῶν ἀσεβῶν in the church." Once more the author is principally concerned with forgeries that he judges to be heretical. And here again, the author opposes "pseudepigraphic books" of the heretics, without having any problem producing a pseudepigraphic book of his own. Among other things, as we will see, this kind of warning against forgeries proved to be a powerful tool in the hands of a forger, as it served, among other things, to throw the reader off the scent of his own deceit, as recognized, again, by Steimer.[23]

What we have here in the Apostolic Constitutions, then, is not only a liar who condemns lying and a deceiver who is himself deceived; we also have a forger who condemns forgeries. His own forgery, in any event, was spectacularly successful. Later orthodox church leaders took him seriously when he claimed to be the apostolic band. From three centuries further on, for example, the so-called Trullan Council of 692 accepted as fully authoritative the eighty-five Apostolic Canons, which appear in 8.47 of the book. The rest of the Apostolic Constitutions was treated by the council as suspect, not because it was forged but because later heretics obviously intercepted the text and interpolated false passages into it. And so, as Canon 2 of the council reads:

> It has also seemed good to this holy Council, that the eighty-five canons, received and ratified by the holy and blessed Fathers before us, and also handed down to us in the name of the holy and glorious Apostles should from this time forth remain firm and unshaken for the cure of souls and the healing of disorders. And in these canons we are bidden to receive the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles [written] by Clement. But formerly through the agency of those who erred from the faith certain adulterous matter was introduced, clean contrary to piety, for the polluting of the Church, which obscures the elegance and beauty of the divine decrees in their present form. We therefore reject these Constitutions so as the better to make sure of the edification and security of the most Christian flock; by no means admitting the offspring of heretical error, and cleaving to the pure and perfect doctrine of the Apostles.[24]

THE FABRICATIONS OF EPIPHANIUS

As a further example of a forger who perpetrated a fraud, we might consider the

work of a contemporary of the author of the Apostolic Constitutions, the doughty defender of the apostolic faith, Epiphanius of Salamis. Throughout his major work, the *Panarion*, an eighty-chapter refutation of all things heretical, Jewish and Christian, Epiphanius repeatedly demeans his opponents for using forged and apocryphal books. Nowhere is he more explicit in his condemnations than in his attack in book 26 on the Phibionites (known also as Gnostics and Borborites; he gives them numerous names). Among the false and forged books that this heretical sect used, Epiphanius explicitly condemns a book called Noriah, the Gospel of Perfection, the Gospel of Eve, the Lesser Questions of Mary, the Greater Questions of Mary, the Books of Seth, Apocalypses of Adam, the Birth of Mary, and the Gospel of Philip. Many of these books are now lost, although we do have still today an Apocalypse of Adam, the Gospel of Philip, the Birth of Mary (= Protevangelium Jacobi), and the Second Treatise of the Great Seth. Whether the extant versions are the books Epiphanius had in mind is anyone's guess.

Epiphanius is particularly well informed about the Phibionites and their literature, he tells us, because as a young man he was nearly seduced—literally—into their sect. According to his autobiographical, yet imaginative, account, as a young man he was approached by two attractive women who urged him to join with them in their sectarian worship, which, as we will see, was anything but sanctified (from Epiphanius' perspective). He nearly succumbed but in the end managed to escape their clutches, and he reported to the authorities what they were doing. The authorities went on a search and dispelled the band.

In the course of his near seduction, Epiphanius tells us, he managed to procure and read a number of the Phibionites' sacred books. One that particularly struck him was the Greater Questions of Mary, from which he quotes a passage in order to highlight its extraordinary, not to say completely scandalous, character. The passage concerns an encounter between Jesus and Mary Magdalene and replicates in Gospel form the interests and activities of the Phibionites who had allegedly forged it:

> For in the book called The Greater Questions of Mary (they have also forged one called the Lesser), they indicate that he [Jesus] gave a revelation to her [Mary]. Taking her to the mountain he prayed and then extracted a woman from his side and began having sexual intercourse with her; then he gathered his semen in his hand, explaining that "This is what we must do in order to live." When Mary became disturbed and fell to the ground, he again raised her and said to her, "Why do you

doubt, you of little faith?"[25]

Epiphanius need only cite this passage to show how outrageous it was as a forgery and how implausible it was as an account from the life of Jesus. But one might wonder how plausible it is even as a Phibionite account of Jesus. Is it possible that the account was forged not by the Phibionites but by Epiphanius himself? There are in fact reasons for thinking that Epiphanius invented both the book and the episode.

The place to begin is with Epiphanius' detailed explanation of the scurrilous ritual activities of the Phibionites, which he narrates with scarcely shrouded voyeuristic pleasure. For their periodic Eucharistic celebrations, Epiphanius tells us, the Phibionite devotees came together to enjoy a sumptuous meal. When they arrived at the place of meeting, they greeted one another with a secret handshake, tickling the palm underneath, presumably to assure one another that they were legitimately part of the group, but perhaps also to set the stage for the intimacies to follow. After gorging themselves, the men and women matched up, each with someone other than their own spouse, in order to have indiscriminate sex together. But when the man reached climax, Epiphanius indicates, he would withdraw from the woman. They would then collect his semen in their hands and eat it, saying "This is the body of Christ." If the woman was in her period, they would also collect some of her menstrual blood and consume it, saying "This is the blood of Christ."

If, despite the ordained coitus interruptus, a woman by chance became pregnant, the group would perform a ceremonial abortion; they then cut up the fetus and ate it communally as a special Eucharistic meal.

Epiphanius also tells us that the Phibionite men who had advanced to roles of leadership no longer required women for their periodic celebrations. They are said to have engaged in sacred homosexual activities. Moreover, some members of the group practiced holy masturbation, consuming the body of Christ in the privacy of their own homes. This practice was justified by an appeal to Scripture: "Working with your own hands, that you may have something to give also to those in need."

According to Epiphanius, the Phibionites' ritual activities were closely tied to the theological views of the group. They are said to have believed that this world is separated from the divine realm by 365 heavens, each of them controlled by an archon who must be placated in order to allow the soul to rise through his realm. Since the soul first descended through all 365 heavens and then must reascend, it must pass by all the archons, twice. The journey occurred

proleptically here on earth through a kind of empathy, as the man, during the course of the nocturnal sex liturgy, called out the secret name of one of the ruling archons, effecting a kind of identification with him that allowed safe passage through his realm. Since each archon must be passed by twice, as Epiphanius is quick to point out, each of the Phibionite men could expect to seduce female devotees on at least 730 festal occasions.

There was another link between the Phibionites' ritual activities and their theological system. Like other Gnostic groups, the Phibionites believed that human bodies were places of imprisonment for seeds of the divine, and the goal of the religion was to set the seed free. Since the seed comes to be implanted in the body through the sex act—literally in the exchange of bodily fluids—then the fluids were to be collected and consumed as an image of ultimate reunification. When, however, the seed was left inside the woman and a new body was formed, this allowed for the generation of another place of imprisonment. The fetus then was to be aborted in order to thwart the divinities keen on maintaining the system of entrapment. And so, whereas procreation defeated the true goal of existence and led to further entrapment and bondage, the ritualistic ingestion of semen, menses, and the occasional fetus provided liberation.

The Great Questions of Mary helped provide a textual basis—from the life of Jesus—for the ritual practices of the group. But did such a text actually exist?

The prior question is whether Epiphanius' description of the activities of the group is at all plausible. Historians have long treated Epiphanius in general with a healthy dose of skepticism.[26] No patristic source is filled with more invective and distortion; Epiphanius frequently makes connections between historical events that we otherwise know are unrelated, and he expressly claims to write horrific accounts precisely in order to repulse his readers from the heresies he describes (Pan. Proem. I. 2). His description of the Phibionites and their sex rituals, nonetheless, has been taken as historically grounded by a dismaying number of competent scholars. For Stephen Gero, the fact that other heresiological sources down into the Middle Ages mention the group (which he calls the Borborites) and level charges of immorality against them indicates that they did indeed exist and that they were indeed immoral.[27] But surely the perdurance of traditional slander is not the best gauge of historical veracity. So too Stephen Benko argues that the close ties between the ritual activities of the group and their theological views show that the account of Epiphanius is entirely plausible.[28] But this overlooks that it is Epiphanius himself who establishes the linkage, which may just as well show that he has invented a set of scandalous

rituals imagined as appropriate to the nefarious theology of the group. How would we know?

One obvious place to start is with Epiphanius' sources of information. Because he had some contact with the group as a young man—was nearly seduced into it—it is sometimes claimed that he had special access to their liturgical practices. But this is scarcely plausible. Epiphanius indicates that he spurned the advances of the two attractive Phibionite women *before* being drawn into their orb. This must mean that he was never present for any of the ritual activities. And it defies belief that missionaries would inform outsiders about the scandalous and reprehensible activities of the group before they were admitted into the inner circle. Potential converts were not likely to be won over by accounts of ritualistic consumption of fetuses.

Epiphanius stands in a long line of Christian heresiologists who claimed that their opponents, especially Gnostics, subscribed to impenetrable and ridiculous mythological understandings of the world while engaging in outrageous and scurrilous behavior, all as part of their religion.[29] As far back as Irenaeus, two centuries earlier, we learn of Valentinians who allegedly taught that those who possess the divine seed should give their spirit to spiritual things and their flesh to fleshly things, so that indiscriminate copulation was not only permissible but a *desideratum* for the pneumatichoi (*Adv. Haer*. I. 6.3–4); the Carpocratians are said to have practiced indiscriminate sex, and indeed their theology compelled them to violate every conceivable moral law and ethical norm so as to avoid being reincarnated ad infinitum (I.25.4); the heretic Marcus reportedly excited attractive women by inspiring them to speak in tongues, after which they became putty in his lascivious hands (I.13.3). Maligning the Other for sexual offenses was de rigueur among orthodox heresiologists.

And this is not the ammunition simply of Christian heresy hunters: throughout antiquity it was standard polemical fare to charge one's opponents with the most nefarious of crimes against nature and humanity, in particular indiscriminate sex, infanticide, and cannibalism. The Christians were charged with such activities by pagans such as Fronto, tutor to Marcus Aurelius, and by Jews such as the one introduced, or rather imagined, by Celsus. Jews had to fend off charges by pagan antagonists; pagans describe comparable activities in play among other pagans.[30]

That the polemic is standard should always give one pause in the face of any particular instantiation of it. But with groups of Gnostics we are on particularly thorny ground. The proto-orthodox heresiologists uniformly assumed that since various Gnostic groups demeaned the material world and bodily existence within

it, they had no difficulty in demeaning the body. Moreover, since for Gnostics the body was irrelevant for ultimate salvation, reasoned the heresiologists, then the body could be used and abused at will. And so, for their opponents, the Gnostics engaged in all sorts of reprehensible bodily activities, precisely to demonstrate their antimaterialist theology.

This heresiological commonplace has been effectively refuted in modern times. The one thing the Nag Hammadi library has shown about Gnostic ethics is that the heresiologists from Irenaeus (and no doubt before) to Epiphanius (and certainly after) got the matter precisely wrong. Many Gnostic groups did devalue the body. But that did not lead them to flagrant acts of immorality. On the contrary, since the body was the enemy and was to be escaped, the body was to be treated harshly. One was not to indulge in the pleasures of the flesh precisely because the goal was to escape the trappings of the flesh. The Nag Hammadi treatises embody a decidedly ascetic ideal, just the opposite of what one would expect from reading the polemics of the proto-orthodox and orthodox heresiologists.[31]

Which takes us back to Epiphanius and his Greater Questions of Mary. Epiphanius, as we have seen, does claim to have read the Phibionites' literature, and this claim is sometimes taken to substantiate his account, even though he himself both provides the account and makes the claim. Here as always Epiphanius must be taken with a pound of salt. The books of the Phibionites could not have been widely circulated outside the group—at least any books that documented their scandalous activities. So possibly Epiphanius read some of their theological or mythological treatises, and drew (or conjured up) his own conclusions. But did he read the Greater Questions of Mary and quote it accurately in his *Panarion*?

There is evidence that some such book did at one time exist: it is at least mentioned elsewhere, although there is no evidence that any other author of a surviving work actually had seen it.[32] But nowhere else, outside of Epiphanius, are we given any indication of its contents. The episode that Epiphanius cites of Jesus engaging in illicit sex, coitus interruptus, and consumption of his own semen coincides perfectly well with Epiphanius' description of the activities of the Phibionites themselves. Moreover, Epiphanius almost certainly fabricated the accounts of these activities: he had never seen them, no one from within the group would have told him about them, they could not have been described in their other literature, and they stand at odds with what we do know of the ethical impulses of all other Gnostic groups from antiquity. On these grounds I would propose that Epiphanius made up the account of the Greater Questions of Mary.

The Phibionites may have had a long-lived reputation for scurrilous activities—thus Gero—but if they were like every other Gnostic group for which we have firsthand knowledge—and why would they not be?—then their antimaterialist theology did not lead to socially scandalous and illegal promiscuity, but to ascetic dismissal of the passions of the flesh. The conclusion seems inevitable: Epiphanius got the matter precisely wrong and then fabricated his accounts, and at least one document, in order to make his point.[33]

OTHER CHRISTIAN FORGERS WHO ATTACK FORGERY

Epiphanius would not be the first Christian author to condemn forgeries and then produce a forgery (or at least a fabrication) himself; nor would he be the last. Indeed, one of our earliest Christian writings of record may represent an analogous, if less outrageous, situation. As is well known, Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians warns its readers against an earlier letter "as if by us" to the effect that "the Day of the Lord is almost here" (2:2). In other words, the author is concerned about a forgery that has the potential of leading his readers astray about the true nature of eschatology. The irony—one to which we should be slowly growing accustomed by now—is that 2 Thessalonians is itself widely thought not to be by Paul, even though it claims to be written by Paul and goes out of its way to convince its readers that it really is by Paul (thus 3:17).[34] Among other things, the passage in 2:2 makes it relatively certain that forgeries in the name of Paul were being produced already in the New Testament period. If 2 Thessalonians is authentic, then Paul knows of a troubling forgery in his name already during his lifetime; if 2 Thessalonians is not authentic, then it is itself a forgery in Paul's name, in all probability not long after his death. Either way, there are Pauline forgeries in circulation. I will provide a fuller discussion of the matter later, but for now it is enough to state the widely held view that 2 Thessalonians is not Pauline. What this means, then, is that this is the first recorded instance in which a Christian forger—someone other than Paul claiming to be Paul—is warning his readers against a Christian forgery.

Here then is a ploy used at the beginning of the Christian era. And it was used for centuries to come, even after the invention of printing. In his lively and compelling book *Forgers and Critics*, Anthony Grafton points to no less a figure than Erasmus as another instance. Erasmus made a living off of exposing the forgeries, fabrications, and falsifications of his intellectual and religious tradition. Following in the path of the great Lorenzo Valla, for example, he showed compelling reasons for thinking that the famous correspondence

between Paul and Seneca was forged: the letters are banal, Christ is hardly mentioned in them, Paul himself is portrayed as cowardly and timorous, and it is stupid to imagine that Seneca offered Paul a book "On the Abundance of Words" (De copia verborum) in order to help him write better Latin ("If Paul did not know Latin he could have written in Greek. Seneca did know Greek").[35]

But what goes around comes around. In 1530 Erasmus published an edition of the works of the third-century Cyprian, including a new treatise that Erasmus claimed to have found "in an ancient library," *De duplici martyrio* ("On the Two Forms of Martyrdom"). In this treatise the traditional martyrs are praised; but Cyprian also praises those who are martyrs in a different sense, who live a life of sacrifice (especially sexual) in the here and now. In Grafton's words, the treatise "takes a position highly sympathetic to Erasmus, who had always disliked the kind of Christianity that equated suffering with virtue, and had always preferred the human Christ hoping to avoid death in Gethsemane to the divine Christ ransoming man by dying at Calvary."[36] Grafton notes that the book is found in no manuscript that survives, it explicates passages of Scripture in ways paralleled in Erasmus's own commentaries, and the Latin writing style is very similar to Erasmus's own in such works as *The Praise of Folly*. Grafton's convincing conclusion:

> *De duplici martyrio* is not Erasmus' discovery but his composition; it marks an effort to find the support of the early Church for his theology at the cost—which he elsewhere insisted must never be paid—of falsifying the records of that Church. The greatest patristic scholar of the sixteenth century forged a major patristic work.[37]

From New Testament times to the early years of printing: forgers who condemn forgery. There are numerous examples between these two points. As Speyer has argued: "Frequently, however, the eras of incisive critique were also rich in forgeries. Hilduin of St. Denis, rather like Anastosius Sinaites, is critic and forger in one."[38] He later names as well the ninth-century archbishop of Rheims, Hincmar.[39]

Guilty parties leveling a charge are not found solely in the Christian tradition, of course, as we saw at the outset in the case of Heraclides Ponticus and Dionysius the Renegade. As a final example we might consider the charge leveled at the emperor Hadrian in the forged Historia Augusta, on the pen of (Pseudo-) Spartianus. Hadrian is faulted for instructing his freedmen to attach their own names to his autobiography, to provide it with something less than

self-referential credentials: "So desirous of a wide-spread reputation was Hadrian that he even wrote his own biography; this he gave to his educated freedmen, with instructions to publish it under their own names. For indeed, Pflegon's writings, it is said, are Hadrian's in reality" (*Hadrian* 1.6).[40]

Yet again we have the exposure of a forged document (Pseudo-Hadrian) by a forger (Pseudo-Spartianus). The Historia Augusta is full of such irony, never found more elegantly than in the pseudonymously penned statement of *Aurelian* 1–2: "There is no writer, at least in the realm of history, who has not made some false statement." And this by an author who is writing, to use Ronald Syme's term, under a "bogus name."[41]

CONCLUSION: THE THEMES OF THE STUDY

These anecdotal accounts set the stage and express the themes for our detailed examination of the use of forgery in the context of early Christian polemics. Each incident has involved the use of forgery in a polemical context, where the forgery, based on an authority claimed under the guise of an assumed name, provided ammunition for the assault on the views of another.[42] In each case, the forgery was meant to deceive its readers; that is to say, the authorial claims were meant to be believed. No one approved of someone else's forgery; the practice of forgery was condemned, in fact, even in works that were themselves forged. This is just one of the ironies that emerge from the ancient forged literature. One of its corollaries is that forgeries were sometimes used to counter the views of other forgeries. This is a phenomenon that I will be calling "counterforgery" in its narrow sense. We will see numerous instances of the phenomenon throughout the Christian tradition of the first four centuries.

Before looking specifically at the Christian materials, it will be important to have a more thorough grounding in the practice of forgery in the broader environment, defined here as the Greek and Roman worlds of antiquity and late antiquity. This will be the subject of Chapters Four and Five. First, however, I need to explain the terminology that I will be using throughout the study and justify my usage. That will be the subject of the next chapter.

1. For texts and fragments, see the standard edition of F. Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles*, Hefte VII, *Heracleides Pontikos* 2nd ed. (Basel: Schwabe 1969); and now Eckart Schütrumpf, *Heraclides of Pontus: Text and Translations* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2009). For a full study, see H. B. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). Contra Wehrli, who based his judgment on the comments of Diogenes Laertius, Heraclides is now

seen as a member of the Platonic Academy, not a member of the school of Aristotle. So Gottschalk (pp. 2–6) and Schütrumpf (p. vii).

2. Texts and translation in R. D. Hicks, *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 2 vols. LCL (Cambridge: Harvard, 1972).

3. All anecdotes are taken from Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 5.6.

4. Richard Bentley, “Dissertation upon Phalaris,” in *The Works of Richard Bentley*, ed. Alexander Dyce, vol. 1 (London: F. MacPherson, 1836; reprinted New York: Hildesheim, 1971), pp. 289–96.

5. See H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903); vol. 1, pp. 93–96.

6. Some editors have proposed amending ουδ' to ου δε, so that the acrostic ends with ἐπίσταται, followed by Diogenes’ comments, “but he was not ashamed.” See Hicks, *Diogenes Laertius* ad loc.

7. Wehrli, *Schule*, pp. 62–63.

8. And one can think of other options. For example, it is possible that Dionysius knew that Heraclides was beginning a work on Sophocles; or, possibly—in a world of limited book distribution—he arranged for this work simply to fall into Heraclides’ hands; and so on.

9. Galen, *In Hipp. Epid. II* comment II.

0. See pp. 390–96 and the useful introduction in the first volume of Marcel Metzger’s important edition of the text in the Sources Chrétienne, *Les constitutions apostoliques*, SC 320 (Paris: Cerf, 2008).

1. *Architecture*, book 7, preface 3. Translation of Frank Granger, *Vitruvius on Architecture, Books VI–X*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1934). For other discussions of plagiarism in antiquity, see, for example, Polybius *Histories* 9.2.1–2 and Pliny, *Natural History*, Preface 20–23, and my discussion on pp. 52–55.

2. Unless otherwise noted, English translations are my own. For a full translation, see James Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles,” in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7; reprint edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004; American edition original, 1886). Hereafter *ANF*.

3. Bruno Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis: Die Gattung der altchristlichen Kirchenordnungen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), p. 133.

4. Thus M. Metzger, “Les CA par contre ont été diffuses sous le nom de Clément, … Les CA sont donc un écrit pseudépigraphique,” *Les Constitutions Apostoliques*, vol. 1, pp. 33–34; similarly Bruno Steimer, “Clemens agiert als Sekretär der versammelten Apostel; … also hat ihm der CA-Kompilator eine

Vermittelrolle zugewiesen" *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 130.

5. For discussions of διά in the context of letter writing and carrying, see the discussion on pp. 248–49 with reference to Silvanus' alleged role in the letter of 1 Peter.

6. This is a common view among the commentators on the Apostolic Constitutions, for example, Metzger, *Constitutions Apostoliques*, 1. 33–38; and Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 130–33. For an attempt to deny that the author intended to deceive his readers, see Joseph G. Mueller, *L'ancien testament dans l'ecclésiologie des Pères* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 77–84. Mueller's arguments fail to convince. He claims, for example, that since the Apostolic Constitutions condemns the use of forgery to authenticate a perspective, it would not use precisely the means that it condemns. This overlooks the fact that forgers commonly practiced what they condemned, as we will see; in fact, they condemned what they practiced precisely in order to convince their readers that they were not doing what they condemned. Mueller also argues that the author could not have used documents known in the community (the Didascalia, the Didache, and the Apostolic Traditions, along with the fourth-century canons that appear in 8.47), while seriously maintaining that these derived from the apostles, when the readers would have recognized them for what they were. This objection assumes that we know precisely what we do not: who was in the author's community and what texts they were familiar with, let alone whether he circulated his work in his own close-knit community.

7. On the question of whether pseudepigraphic writings were considered a form of lying, see below pp. 128–32. For now, it is enough simply to note the derivation of pseudepigrapha—writings inscribed with a ψεῦδος—a "lie."

8. It is hard to imagine how someone could claim the author—the forger—was not trying to be taken seriously. Here is someone who insists that his own book be accepted as canonical.

9. I will justify the use of the term *forgery* for the canonical pseudepigrapha below, pp. 28–32. For now it is enough to note that the books falsely claiming to be written by Peter (for example) inside the New Testament are no different, in extending that false claim, from books that falsely claim to be written by Peter outside the New Testament.

10. See 3 Corinthians, where the same two are mentioned.

11. *L'ancien testament*, pp. 79–80.

12. "Indem der CA-Kompilator seine Fälschungkritik durch ein Echtheitskriterium ergänzt, vermeidet er es, sein eigenes Werk dem selbst formulierten Verdikt zu unterwerfen; das Echtheitskriterium liefert ihm ein probates Mittel, als

Fälschung gegen Fälschung zu polemisieren." *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 353.

3. "The warning against pseudepigraphal writings, which appears twice in the Apostolic Constitutions, must be considered the strongest argument in favor of its authenticity." ("Als stärkstes Argument der Authentizität ist die in der CA doppelt vorkommende Warnung vor pseudepigraphischen Schriften zu werten.") *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 132–33.

4. Translation of Henry Percival from Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, vol. 14. Reprint edition Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994; American edition original, 1900), p. 361. Hereafter *NPNF*.

5. Translation mine. For the Greek text, see Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 610.

6. For an older, but still useful, if basic, study, see Gerard Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius*, Studies in Christianity and Judaism 1 (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University, 1981). More generally, see Jon Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*, NAPSPMS 13 (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1988).

7. "With Walter Bauer on the Tigris: Encratite Orthodoxy and Libertine Heresy in Syro-Mesopotamian Christianity," in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1986), pp. 287–307.

8. "The Libertine Gnostic Sect of the Phibionites according to Epiphanius," *VC* 21 (1967): 103–19.

9. For the link between charges of sexual deviance and heresy in ancient polemics, see the insightful analysis of Jennifer Knust, *Abandoned to Lust* (New York: Columbia University, 2005).

0. On Fronto, see Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 9.5; on Celsus, see Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 6.27; on Jewish apologia, see Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 2.8; on pagan attacks on pagans, see the burlesque in *The Phoenician Miscellanies*. In general, see Stephen Benko, "The Charges of Immorality and Cannibalism," in *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1984), ch. 3.

1. See the now classic study of Frederik Wisse, "The Nag Hammadi Library and the Heresiologists," *VC* 25 (1971): 205–23.

2. It appears, for example, as one of the thirty-five Gospel books in the Samaritan Chronicle II.

3. Technically speaking, the Greater Questions of Mary would not be a forgery in

the sense that I will be defining it presently, but a fabrication—a made-up narrative.

4. For a fuller discussion, see pp. 156–71.

5. Cited in Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 43; quoting from P. S. Allen et al., eds., *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906–1958), 8:40.

6. Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, p. 44.

7. Ibid., p. 45.

8. "Oft aber waren Zeiten scharfsinniger Kritik auch reich an Fälschungen. Hilduin von St. Denis ist ähnlich wie Anastasios Sinaites Kritiker und Fälscher in einer Person," Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 85.

9. Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 200. See further H. Schrörs, *Hinkmar, Erzbischof von Reims* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1884), pp. 398–400; Schrörs tries to exonerate Hincmar of the charge of forgery in pp. 507–12. But see B. Krusch, "Reimser Remigius Fälschungen," in *Neues Archiv Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 20 (1895): 531–37.

0. Translation of David Magie in *The Historia Augusta*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1921–32).

1. Ronald Syme, *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), ch. 1.

2. This is true even of the Apostolic Constitutions, as we will see later in Chapter Twelve.

CHAPTER THREE

Terms and Taxonomies

Many scholars, especially Neutestamentlers, object to the use of the term *forgery* for the phenomenon I have so far described: a book written with a false authorial claim.[1] This is because of its negative connotations, sometimes asserted to be a modern and thus anachronistic imputation. I will deal with these objections in detail in Chapter Four. For now, it is enough to say that the terms used in antiquity were just as negative or even more so. What we call forgeries—books with false authorial claims—were typically called deceits, lies, and bastards.

THE TERMS OF FORGERY

Before discussing ancient terms, I need to clarify how I will be using modern ones. Those who object to the term *forgery* typically prefer to speak of pseudonymity or pseudepigraphy. Often these two terms are used synonymously, but that can lead to confusion, since other scholars, especially German and French, draw a clear distinction between them. Consider the differentiation of Eve-Marie Becker: "The terms pseudepigraphy and pseudonymity should not simply be used synonymously. In the case of pseudonymity, a fictitious author is chosen, in the case of pseudepigraphy, the work is ascribed to a real author."[2]

Rather than considering the two terms as categorically distinct, however, I prefer to see one as a subset of the other. For the purposes of this study, I will be using the term *pseudonymous* in a broad sense to refer to any writing that appears under a name other than that of the author. Roughly speaking, there are two kinds of pseudonymity. Some books, past and present, are written under a fictitious pen name. In modern times one naturally thinks of Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) or George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans). The question of the "innocence" of the fiction is often open, even with the use of pen names. Evans chose a male name, in part, to facilitate the publication of her work. It was not a purely innocent act, but a closely reasoned one intended to effect a desired result. Even so, it was not "deceptive" in the way it would have been if she had written a novel claiming to be Jane Austen. In the ancient world there are examples of fictitious pseudonymity as well, as I will discuss later in this chapter: Xenophon wrote the *Anabasis* under the name of Themistogenes (a not altogether innocent

choice, as we will see) and Iamblichus, in a different era, wrote his *Mysteries* as Abamon.

The other form of pseudonymity occurs when a book appears under the name of a well-known person who did not, in fact, write it. It is for this kind of pseudonymous writing that I will be using the more specific term *pseudepigraphy*. And so, all pseudepigrapha are pseudonymous, but not all pseudonymous writings are pseudepigraphic, as I am using the terms. Writings that appear under a false (known) name are again of two types. First, there are books that were originally published anonymously (or under a homonym) that were later ascribed by other writers, editors, scribes, or readers to well-known persons who did not actually write them. This kind of false ascription is not to be laid at the feet of the author, who produced the work without attaching any name to it (or simply his own name, which he happened to share with a well-known person). It is not an instance, then, of authorial deceit but of later misattribution.

The other kind of pseudepigraphon does involve an authorial claim. This is when an author indicates that he is a known (usually famous, at least locally) person, realizing full well that he is in fact someone else. As we will see in further detail, there are grounds for thinking that this kind of false authorial claim was typically meant to deceive the reader. Authors who wanted to commit such acts of deception had a variety of reasons. And they used a range of literary techniques to make the deception effective. All these matters we will consider at length in this chapter and the ones that follow. For now it is enough to establish the meaning of the term I will be using. This kind of pseudepigraphy is what I am calling "forgery," when an author claims to be someone else who is well known, at least to some readers. Forgeries involve false authorial claims.

The intention to deceive[3] is part and parcel of what it meant to produce a forgery; the claim to be a well-known person is not simply an innocent fiction. This distinction was critical to the greatest historian of ancient forgery, Wolfgang Speyer: "It is the intent to deceive that, beyond any particular literary purpose, makes a pseudepigraphon a forgery"[4] For Speyer, an authorial claim was deceptive and false when it functioned in some nonliterary way, that is, as something other than a fiction, in order to accomplish some desired end. This purposeful intention to deceive the reader is what made a falsely named writing a forgery. And if it was a forgery, it was a form of literary lying: "Only where intent to deceive—that is to say, dolus malus—exists, does [a work] attain to the status of forgery. Forgery thus belongs in the same category as the lie."[5]

As I have already indicated, the term *forgery* is no more derogatory than the ancient terms used to describe the same phenomenon. In the texts that I will be

dealing with, the most common terms include the following (and their cognates, in various accidental formations; all have their translational equivalents in Latin):

Ψεῦδος, the common term for "lie." We have already seen the use of the term and some of its derivations—for example, ψευδεπίγραφα. As Armin Baum has argued in the most recent and useful analysis, in some contexts the term can, to be sure, mean an unintentional "falsehood." But Baum shows that this is not the normal meaning unless it is accompanied by some qualifying phrase, such as κατ᾽ ἀγνοίαν.[6] Even beyond this, and more important still, the idea of an unintended falsehood (when one says something that is false, without knowing it or meaning to) is of no relevance to the term as it occurs in the contexts we are concerned with here. The authors who wrote 1 Timothy, 3 Corinthians, and the Letter to the Laodiceans, claiming to be Paul, knew full well that they were not really Paul. Ancient people would call these literary productions ψευδεπίγραφα: writings that are inscribed with a lie. They were not inadvertent falsehoods.

Νόθος. This term refers to a child born out of wedlock, and carries with it all the negative connotations of our term *bastard*. A literary work is "illegitimate" if it does not actually belong to the person named as its author, just as a child is illegitimate if its real father is not known. For some authors, such as the much later Neoplatonist Olympiodorus, the term applies to books regardless of authorial intent: homonymous writings are, for him, *νόθα*.[7] My concern in this study is not with falsely ascribed (or purely homonymous) writings, but with writings with clear authorial claims. Ancients often referred to such a writing as a bastard (Latin: nothus or spurius).[8]

Κίβδηλος. This term, "counterfeit," is entirely negative in connotation as well, referring often to the adulteration of coinage, and denoting that which is false, deceitful, and fraudulent. Often it is used in contrast with ἀληθής.

Speyer lists twenty-six Greek terms, with Latin equivalents, sometimes used to describe the act of committing forgery, almost all of them with negative connotations, including διαφθείρειν, μεταχαράττειν, and ῥᾳδιουργεῖν; to his list could be added πλάσσειν and ἀναπλάσσειν, "to make up," "invent," "fabricate." Simply on the terminological level, this was not a respectable practice. When one considers what ancient authors actually said about the practice—a matter to which we will soon turn—there appears to be no reason to shy away from calling it what it is. *Forgery* is not an unnecessarily negative term, contrary to the claims

of some New Testament scholars.[9] Books that made false authorial claims were thought of as lies, bastards, and counterfeits.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PHENOMENA

Normal and Special Cases: "Typical" Instances of Forgery

Practices of forgery are complex and not easily classified. In "normal" forgeries, if we may use the term, an author falsely claims to be a well-known person. But that claim can be made in a variety of ways and with different levels of insistence. Just considering examples from our earliest Christian writings, in a number of cases the author states his assumed name and does nothing further in his writing to assure his reader that he really is who he claims to be. That appears to be the case, for example, in such books as 1 Peter and James.

In other instances, the author uses validation techniques to assure his readers that he is the actual writer. We will see such techniques more fully in Chapter Five. For now it is enough to note several of the most obvious kinds. In some instances, the author inserts corresponding verisimilitudes into his account to make the reader think he really must be who he says he is. An outstanding set of examples occurs in 2 Timothy, where the author reminds his (fictitious) reader of their past interactions ("you have observed my teaching, my way of life, … my patience … my persecutions, my sufferings …" 3:10–11), but also gives to him personalized instructions: "Hurry and come to me quickly … and when you come bring the cloak that I left behind in Troas with Carpus, and also the books and especially the parchments" (4:9, 13). Such verisimilitudes assure the reader that this really is Paul writing to his young companion Timothy.

In other instances the author intensifies the claims through asseverations intended to demonstrate beyond doubt that he is who he claims to be. This happens, for example, in 2 Peter, whose author insists with some vehemence that he was actually there to see the majesty of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:16–18). He was among the "eyewitnesses" to the event and among those who "heard the voice that came from heaven." The argument that he makes depends on his telling the truth about the matter. So too the author of 1 Timothy, who swears an oath "I speak the truth, I am not lying," when he claims to be Paul, "preacher, apostle of the truth, and teacher of Gentiles" (2:7).

Sometimes the asseverations take the form of written guarantees of the author's identity, as happens, for example, in the famous conclusion of 2

Thessalonians: “This greeting is in my own hand, the hand of Paul, which is the sign in all my letters; this is how I write” (3:17).

There are other kinds of forgery that might be considered special cases, somewhat more complicated than the simple instance of an author claiming at the outset to be someone else. Here I will mention three such instances:

Embedded forgeries. Some writings do not make the explicit claim to be authored by a well-known person, but instead embed first-person narratives—or other self-identifying devices—in the course of their discussions, without differentiating the first person from the author. In these instances the reader naturally assumes that the person speaking in the first person is actually the writer of the account. A good example occurs in the Ascension of Isaiah, whose author does not self-identify at the outset but instead sets out an anonymous historical framework, written to sound very much like the prose narrative sections of the book of Isaiah itself. Partway through the narrative, however, and at key points throughout, the revelation given through Isaiah begins to be delivered in the first person. The (real) author of the account does not indicate that he is now quoting someone else, making the reader assume that the author has now begun speaking about what he himself experienced. This provides an unimpeachable authority for the account: it is revealed by none other than Isaiah. This kind of embedding strategy shows how blurry the lines of distinction can be between forgery and other kinds of writing. In many ways an embedded forgery is comparable to the use of speeches invented by historians and placed on the lips of their protagonists; but in those cases it is clear that the author has moved from narrative description to an (alleged) speech, even though the speech is invented. In an embedded forgery the narrator simply slips into another guise and becomes the authenticating figure. In another sense this kind of forgery is not so very different from fabrications of sayings reported to be from an authoritative figure, but that are actually the inventions of the author or of the unknown tradents who have passed them along in the oral tradition—such as many of the sayings of the Gospel of Thomas or later (or earlier) Gospel materials. But there again the sayings are attributed to another person and are presented by a narrator who is distinct from the one who is speaking, unlike what happens in the embedded forgery. For the latter, the narrator becomes the speaker (or participant in the action of the narrative). The Ascension of Isaiah, then, is a kind of forgery. The speaker who describes his experiences to the scribe recording the account is allegedly none other than Isaiah of Jerusalem himself.[10]

Redactional forgeries. There are a number of instances in which a book was originally circulated as an anonymous work, and was known in that form for some time, before a later editor or scribe altered the text to make it present an authorial claim. The book is not then a forgery from its inception, but it becomes a forgery in the course of its transmission, not in the sense that the (original) author made a false authorial claim but in the sense that a later redactor reworded the text in such a way as to have the author (unwittingly) make such a claim. This is the case, for example, with the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. In the oldest parts of the textual tradition, this account of Jesus the mischievous wunderkind is simply narrated apart from any authorial claim. Only in later manuscripts is the name Thomas attached to it. Presumably this Thomas is to be taken as Jesus' twin brother Judas (Didymus), a particularly qualified authority to recount the miraculous childhood of the Son of God. But as Gero has argued, the attribution is late, probably from the Middle Ages.[11] The author himself made no authenticating claims.

Non-pseudepigraphic forgeries. There are other instances in which a book puts forth clear, but false, authorial claims without actually naming an author. This is true of one of the forgeries of the Hebrew Bible, the book of Ecclesiastes, which is allegedly authored by the "son of David," who is ruling as the king in Jerusalem, a man both inestimably rich and wise. Obviously the author means his readers to take him to be Solomon; but he never calls himself by name. This then creates an ironic situation: the author claims to be a famous person without actually naming himself. And so the book is a forgery (Solomon did not actually write it), but it is not, technically speaking, pseudepigraphic since it is not inscribed with the false name. A similar situation obtains much later in Christian circles in a book such as the "Martyrdom of Marian and James," whose author claims, falsely, to have been a personal companion of these two estimable martyrs, but never identifies himself by name.[12]

Some Not-So-Special Cases: When Forgery Is Allegedly Not Forgery

In Chapter Four we will see a number of scholars who, on general principle, are loath to label pseudepigraphic writings (especially canonical cases) forgeries, in part because they fail to see that false authorial claims involve deception. There are other scholars who posit special cases in which forgery is not really forgery. For these scholars, there are indeed instances of deception among the pseudonymous writings of antiquity, but other instances entailed special circumstances that make it inappropriate to label the pseudepigraphic writings in

question forgeries.

Wolfgang Speyer and "Genuine Religious Pseudepigraphy"

One commonly cited flaw in Speyer's rightly celebrated survey of pagan and Christian "Fälschungen" is his special category of "echte religiöse Pseudepigraphie" ("genuine religious pseudepigraphy"). Speyer notes that the category of forgery presupposes the concept of literary property: an author in some sense "owns" his work. Speyer traces this concept back to certain modes of Greek rational thought. When this kind of rationality is not in evidence in an ancient author, who instead writes under the inspiration of a divine being, Speyer maintains, the claim to authorship no longer consists of a deceit. In this case, it is the deity who is allegedly writing the book and the human inscriber is simply a tool in the hand of the divine. This kind of writing cannot be understood "scientifically," since it presupposes a different kind of thought and experience from that of the modern scholar:

> The final form of literary activity listed here, for which a deity is considered to be the originator of the written memorial, can be designated mythical or "religious pseudepigraphy." It is "genuine," as long as the belief in a divine revealer is vividly experienced as such … "genuine" religious pseudepigraphy could appear only in places not yet penetrated by rationalism, that is to say, primarily in regions at the margins of the Greco-Roman world.[13]

As examples Speyer has in mind certain kinds of oracular writing, or from Jewish circles, apocalypses truly based on revelatory experience. He thinks there are virtually no instances in the Christian literature.

This category is not unique to Speyer. In many ways it is similar to the view of J. Sint that "echte religiöser Ergriffenheit" (emotion) could lead to pseudepigraphic activity:

> It has become apparent, that a great number of writings can be explained only on the basis of religious motivations or motivations related to the psychology of religion. From the peculiarity of mythical thinking and genuine religious emotion the author obtains such persuasive power for his undertaking that we can no longer speak of conscious deception, that indeed ethical truth questions do not pose any problems for him and that

he therefore could not fear being unmasked."[14]

For Speyer, there are also instances in which the religious pseudepigraphy is "false" rather than "genuine." This is when a later author, cognizant of Greek rationalistic modes of thought and conversant with ideas of authorship, pretended to be under the inspiration of a divine being, and somewhat cynically then produced an imitation of a genuinely religious pseudepigraphon.

This further differentiation, however, reveals a principal problem with the category. It represents an attempt to render a historical judgment (what kind of pseudepigraphon is this work?) on the basis of a nonhistorical criterion (what is the state of mind of the author? Does he genuinely feel inspired by the divine?).[15] Inner psychological states are never accessible to the historian, and so surely they are not the best basis for forming historical conclusions. Hence the critique of E. J. Bickerman in his extended review of Speyer's work: "The hypothesis concerning 'genuine' religious pseudepigraphy is thus not only spurious, it is useless."[16]

Other objections are raised by H. Balz, who points out that the instances we have of Speyer's genuine religious pseudepigrapha are based on oral traditions that were later written down by an author. They are not, in other words, the product of immediate religious experience of divinely inspired prophets but are literary productions generated for the needs of communities.[17] More recently, and from another angle, P. Beatrice objects that Hesiod received his "information" about the genealogy of the gods from the Muses, yet signed the *Theogony* in his own name, just as the prophets of Israel who were conscious of being under the inspiration of God, and who spoke in his name, nonetheless produced orthonymous works.[18] When they did so, they were certainly not driven by the spirit of Greek rationalism. The other problem is that one might imagine how an author in a divinely inspired ecstatic trance might write in the name of the God who is using him as his vessel; but why would he be driven, then, to claim to be another human? Why produce the writing in the name of someone else, rather than in the name of God?

In any event, since Speyer finds little evidence of any kind of genuine religious pseudepigraphy among Christian authors, his claims on this score are of little direct relevance for the current investigation.

Kurt Aland and the Authorial Spirit of God

By way of contrast, a much cited article by Kurt Aland declares that inspiration by the Spirit of God was precisely a Christian phenomenon and that it can explain the pseudepigraphic practices of the early church. The early Christian authors understood that the Holy Spirit was speaking through them when they wrote, much as he had spoken through them and their co-religionists when they orally delivered the Word of God to their hearers. When writing what the Spirit revealed, it would have been deceitful and false to claim their own names, as if the words were their own. As Aland puts it, "not only was the tool by which the message was given irrelevant, but … it would have amounted to a falsification even to name this tool, because … it was not the author of the writing who really spoke, but only the authentic witness, the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the apostles."[19] As a result:

> When pseudonymous writings of the New Testament claimed the authorship of the most prominent apostles only, this was not a skillful trick of the so-called fakers, in order to guarantee the highest possible reputation and the widest possible circulation for their work, but the logical conclusion of the presupposition that the Spirit himself was the author.[20]

According to Aland, it was only later in the life of the Christian community, once the age of prophecy had ceased, that works falsely written in the names of the apostles could be thought of as actual forgeries. This started happening in the midsecond century. By then "the possibility for the genesis of 'authentically pseudonymous' writings had passed."[21] Like Speyer, then, Aland maintains that there were authentic and inauthentic pseudepigrapha. Only the latter are to be deemed forgeries.

Despite the temporary popularity of Aland's view, there is little to commend it. For one thing, the claim that the earliest Christian authors would not write under their own names because they considered themselves inspired by the Spirit appears simply not to be true. Our earliest author is Paul, who names himself in no uncertain terms, and who certainly felt driven by the Spirit—at least as much as, say, the forgers who produced books in his name in later periods (Ephesians, 1 Timothy, and so on). Moreover, as was the case with Speyer, Aland's view might well explain why an author refused to name himself—it was the Spirit talking, not him personally—but it cannot explain why an author *did* name himself, as some other (well-known) person. If it was the Spirit talking, why claim specifically to be Peter? Or James? Or Jude? Why not simply say "Thus

says the Lord," or "Thus says the Spirit of God"? Or write anonymously altogether?

Moreover, it is worth noting that no ancient pseudepigrapher justifies his work on these grounds, and no ancient critic supplies this explanation for why works were forged. In the end, this is an attempt to justify a practice widely recognized in the ancient environment as deceitful. It is, in other words, theology, not history. And in the view of H. Balz it is not even good theology, as it means that these later "authentic pseudepigraphers" were more inspired by the Spirit than the Apostle Paul was.[22]

David Meade and the "Reactualization of the Tradition"

More influential in recent decades, at least in English-speaking circles, is the notion set forth in a revised Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Nottingham by David Meade, who argues that a good deal of the early Christian pseudepigrapha—at least those found in the canon—can be explained not as forgeries meant to deceive but as claims to stand within authoritative streams of tradition. Meade argues that the authors of the New Testament were appropriating modes of authorship with a venerable standing in the Jewish tradition (he pays no heed to the literary practices of the rest of the world). In Jewish writings, Meade avers, it was common to assume the name and the mantle of a fountainhead of a tradition, not in order to lie about one's own identity but in order (truthfully) to indicate one's traditional allegiances. This happened already in biblical sources.

So, for example, the book of Isaiah is not entirely the work of the eighth-century prophet of Jerusalem. The writings of two later authors, living in different contexts and addressing different situations, were added to those of their famous predecessor. This was not to deceive the reader but to inform her that the views and perspectives represented in this new account stood in the authoritative line of tradition begun by Isaiah himself. So too wisdom sayings produced centuries after the death of Solomon were attributed to the great king in order to apply his traditional wisdom to new situations. Similarly, later apocalyptic traditions were named after such figures as Enoch and Daniel.

In none of these instances was an author trying to deceive his readers. He was instead reactualizing the old tradition for a new context, showing how the old tradition was relevant and important for a new setting. This form of *Vergegenwärtigung*, then, does not represent the illicit borrowing of the name of another; it involves making a legitimate claim to stand in the other's line of

tradition. And so, for example, with respect to the composite book of Isaiah, Meade can conclude:

> The anonymous/pseudonymous expansion of the Isaianic corpus is a recognition that Isaiah had become *part* of the tradition, and *the resultant literary attribution of that corpus must be regarded more as a claim to authoritative tradition by the participants in the process, and less a claim to actual authorship by Isaiah of Jerusalem*.[23] So too, the attribution of Ecclesiastes to Solomon, or of apocalyptic texts to Daniel and Enoch, "*is primarily an assertion of authoritative tradition, not a statement of literary origins*.[24]

And so, for Meade, the authors of New Testament pseudepigrapha, such as the Pastoral epistles, were not being deceptive when they claimed to be apostles. The author of 1 Timothy was informing his reader that he stood within the tradition established by the authentically Pauline epistles. He was genuinely attempting to apply Pauline views to the new situation that he was addressing. His claim to be Paul amounted to an assertion that his exhortations and perspectives were those of Paul himself—or would be, were Paul alive to address the new situation at hand. Vergegenwärtigung then is not forgery; it is a completely legitimate claim to stand closely within the Pauline tradition.

On one hand, this position is innately attractive: it acknowledges the historical fact that a number of the writings of the New Testament are pseudepigraphic, yet it absolves the authors of the charge of forgery. The view is nonetheless seriously flawed, on a number of grounds.

For one thing, Meade isolates the writings of the New Testament canon from the rest of the early Christian literature. Here again, this is theology, not history. Are there really *historical* grounds for claiming that 1 Timothy is pseudepigraphic Vergegenwärtigung but 3 Corinthians is a forgery? Was the author of 3 Corinthians not trying to make Paul speak for a new day? Does he not also stand—or at least try to stand—in line with Paul's teachings, for example, on the importance of the resurrection and life in the body?

In addition, Meade isolates these writings by situating them firmly, and only, in Jewish literary practices of the Bible, as if the New Testament authors were (1) Jews who (2) both knew and embraced the editorial practices that brought the various authors later named Isaiah altogether on the same scroll, or the various strands of the Danielic or Enochic traditions into a single work.

As to the first point, the vast majority of the early Christian authors, in

particular the anonymous and pseudepigraphic writers after Paul (in other words, virtually all of them), were not Jews, did not originate in the Jewish tradition, and show no signs of being intimately familiar with distinctively Jewish authorial practices, if any such thing ever existed. They were gentiles, who learned to write in gentile circles. They certainly did not have Jewish habits of Vergegenwärtigung hardwired into them. Even beyond that, it is very hard indeed to establish that Jewish modes of pseudepigraphy were distinctive. As Christopher Rowland has aptly observed, with respect to the most common form of Jewish pseudepigraphic writing from the time of the New Testament, the apocalypses: "a distinctively Jewish interpretation of Pseudonymity is difficult to uphold."[25] If that is true of Jewish apocalypses, how much more so of Christian writings, which were not written by Jews and were not tied, in terms of genre, to anything specifically Jewish.

It is striking, however, that Meade maintains that the writers of the New Testament pseudepigrapha not only stood within a thousand-year Jewish tradition of reactualization but were conscious of doing so. If this was a literary tradition in ancient Israel, why is it never mentioned in any source from antiquity? The reality is that ancient Jews, at least in the time that Meade is interested in, were in no way conscious of this literary "tradition." That is to say, first-century Jews, lacking access to nineteenth-and twentieth-century scholarship in higher criticism, did not know that Isaiah was the work of three authors put together onto one scroll. For them, and their Christian counterparts, there was one Isaiah and he wrote the entire book. And Daniel wrote Daniel and Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes. How could these later writers have stood in a tradition they did not know existed?

Moreover, many of the key (Jewish) examples that Meade cites simply do not relate to the (Christian) phenomenon he is trying to explain. Whoever wrote 2 Isaiah says nothing about being Isaiah, and we have no idea who put his anonymous writings on a scroll with those of his predecessor from 150 years earlier. How does that relate, then, to the author of 2 Peter, who goes out of his way to inform his readers that he really is Simon Peter and that he actually saw Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, so that he, as opposed to his enemies, knows whereof he speaks? Or to the author of 2 Timothy, who not only names himself as Paul but supplies extensive verisimilitudes to prove it? These are not commensurate cases.

On one point Meade is certainly correct. Whoever wrote 1 Timothy wanted his readers to think that he was standing within the Pauline tradition and that his views were those that Paul would have expressed had he been writing in the

same situation. But of how many instances of pseudepigraphy can that *not* be said? One of the salient features of the ancient Christian literary tradition is precisely that authors taking contrary theological and practical positions appeal to the same authorities in support. Or rather, they claim to be the same authors, while advancing their own views, thinking that their views are, or would be, the views of the authors they are claiming to be. Whoever wrote the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter in order to denigrate the flesh and show its unimportance in the scheme of salvation appealed to Peter's authority in support of his view, and if pressed no doubt would have indicated that this really was Peter's view. But so too would the author of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter, who wrote to show that the fleshly existence ultimately matters and that salvation, and damnation, will be experienced precisely in the flesh. The first author would have considered the second a liar when he called himself Peter, and would have labeled his writing a forgery; the second would have responded in kind. Who is right? It may be possible for historians to adjudicate these claims, at least in theory. One of these writers may indeed be closer to the views of the historical man Peter. But given the fact that he has left us no writings, it is really very difficult to say. And even were we to give the palm to one writer or the other, the reality is that both of them fabricated narratives and then claimed to be Peter in order to deliver them. None of this material goes back to Peter. All of it is fabricated. Both works are forged.

In the end Meade's position that pseudonymous claims of the (canonical) writers is primarily about authoritative tradition rather than literary origins is based on a false and misleading dichotomy. In point of fact, the "authoritative" tradition that a forger lays claim to is made authoritative for the reader precisely because of the claim of literary origins. It is because the author is Peter, or Paul, or Thomas, or John, or Jesus, that the claims of his account are accepted as authoritative. In other words, in all these instances an author has lied about his identity in order to establish the veracity of his account. But so did other authors —sometimes claiming the same names—in order to authorize their discrepant accounts. Completely opposite views are advanced in the same name. All of them are acts of Vergegenwärtigung. But to excuse some of them and not others requires either a set of theological (not historical) norms or a pair of canonical blinders.

Harry Gamble sums the matter up as follows: "Others [outside of Meade] … find nothing distinctive in Jewish pseudepigraphy and regard both Jewish and early Christian pseudonymity merely as particular manifestations of a wider ancient practice of which Greco Roman literature offers many examples."

Specifically with respect to Pauline materials, Gamble maintains: "Pseudonymous authorship is nothing else than it appears to be, namely the use of a revered apostolic name in order to assert the authority of teaching that was believed to be of value by its author, irrespective of its actual origins."[26]

Conclusion

Later we will discuss two other approaches to pseudepigrapha often taken by New Testament scholars in order to minimize the charges of deception: (1) the claim that nondeceptive pseudepigraphy was both widely practiced and sanctioned in the philosophical schools of antiquity, and (2) the assertion that the epistolary pseudepigrapha from early Christianity—at least the canonical cases—can be explained by appealing to the use of a secretary. Both claims, I will argue, are not supported by convincing evidence. These matters, however, need to wait until later chapters. At this stage it is more important to draw some preliminary conclusions. Forgery, based simply on the ancient terminology used to describe it, appears to have been a deceptive practice that was not widely sanctioned (more grounds will be given in Chapter Four). It cannot be explained away on the basis of alleged inspiration by the divine spirit(s); and it was not an innocent matter of reactualizing tradition. Forgery involved the conscious act of making a false authorial claim. Ancient writers considered it a form of lying. Before extending further evidence for this view, in the next chapter, we first need to continue our taxonomic efforts.

RELATED PHENOMENA

There are a number of literary phenomena that are closely related to forgery, and we do well to differentiate among them as clearly as possible.

Literary Fictions

It is widely recognized by scholars today, as it evidently was in antiquity, that some falsely named writings were not meant as deceptions but as literary fictions. This is particularly the case in certain letter collections and epistolary novels, written in the names of well-known figures but probably as rhetorical exercises rather than attempts to deceive a reading public. In many instances it is difficult to tell whether deception was part of the intent; in other instances the matter is clear. In either event this kind of pseudonymous writing has meager

relevance for the present study, as there are no certain instances of pseudepigraphic fiction among the early Christian writings.[27]

The only full collection of epistolary fictions is in R. Hercher's 1873 volume *Epistolographi Graeci*, representing sixty letter writers and some sixteen hundred letters. Recent years have seen a burgeoning of interest in the matter, with a helpful bilingual collection of important specimens by C. D. N. Costa and several important studies, one of them book-length by P. Rosenmeyer.[28]

Costa usefully divides the fictional letters into two types. The first are "imaginary" (sometimes called "comic") letters. These are written under fictitious pen names, such as Aelian, Alciphron, and Philostratus, and appear to be produced by professional rhetoricians, or rhetoricians in training, on topics and themes to which they might devote declamations. They "aim to portray character and various levels of society, or to evoke a past age."[29] The other type comprises letters that are attributed to famous historical figures such as Phalaris or Themistocles, and especially to philosophers such as Anacharsis, Hippocrates, Diogenes, and Socrates. An earlier example would be Ovid's famous *Heroides*, which was clearly meant to be a fiction built on historically fictional characters. In this latter type, the figure in question is made to speak "in character," that is, these are written exercises in ethopoeia. Most of the philosophical letters have a didactic, moralizing aim, but they are also meant to reflect something of the character and personality of the supposed author.[30]

The thorough and enlightening discussion of Rosenmeyer shows, perhaps unwittingly, just how difficult it can be at times to differentiate between literary fictions and deceptions. She notes that R. Syme in particular has argued that these letters should not be termed forgeries, but are better understood as "impostures" (a term that does not seem hugely different in connotation), which "were doubtless created without any serious intent to deceive."[31] Rosenmeyer's principal concern is that these writings not be simply written off as of no importance—as they have been since Bentley's exposure of the letters of Phalaris—and so discarded as the chaff of history. They are important in their own right, when situated in their appropriate historical, cultural, and especially rhetorical contexts.

This is fair enough, but there are some questionable cases. Rosenmeyer herself points out that verisimilitudes were part of the exercise, as these letters speak about the mechanics of writing, sending, sealing, receiving, and so on, for one major reason: "The more realistic the epistolary moment appears, both in terms of the occasion and the specific letter, the more convincing it will be to its readers, who seek the literary thrill of reading someone else's private

messages."[32] This sounds like a concession to the idea that the writers wanted to convince their readers, and it is difficult to draw a very clear line between that attempt and pure literary deception.

One might consider, for example, the two sets of Socratic epistles, one connected with Antisthenes, which urges a rigorous lifestyle, and the other with Aristippus, which supports hedonism. Both advocate their own perspective and inveigh against the other. And why is that? It is because, in Rosenmeyer's own words, "a treatise on the subject would be rejected as just another (mis) interpretation of the philosopher; but a letter in the voice of the great man himself, or in that of his most highly regarded disciple, would be hard to refute."[33] That is exactly right; but it is also the reason that some of these fictions may be seen as going a step further in wanting their readers really to believe them to be actual letters written by the philosopher himself. It is at least possible, that is, that some of these works were produced not simply as rhetorical exercises but in order to perpetrate a literary deceit. However one judges that issue, fictions of this kind were difficult to keep in check. As Martina Janssen observes, there was no way to control their reception history, as later readers in another context may have taken an authorial fiction to be a bona fide authorial claim, so that an original rhetorical exercise came to function as a forgery, apart from any authorial intent.[34]

In any event, with only one or two possible exceptions—possibly the letters of Paul and Seneca?[35]—there are probably no literary fictions among the early Christian writings, produced simply as rhetorical exercises.

Pen Names

Pen names—or pseudonymity in the traditional, German, sense—were not common in antiquity, but were not unheard of either. This use of a pen name differs from a literary fiction of the first type described above in that the composition in question is not a rhetorical exercise in ethopoeia, but an actual writing with a purpose that extends beyond itself.

In some instances a pen name may have been relatively innocent, the opportunity to write a work anonymously under a name chosen at random. This appears to be the case with the work produced by the six purported authors of the Historia Augusta. Ronald Syme in particular has shown that the solitary author of this collection of imperial biographies was a learned but somewhat mischievous scholar from around 400 CE, who fabricated a good deal of information, much of it for his personal enjoyment.[36] He was remarkably

successful in his endeavor to hide his identity: up to the end of the nineteenth century the work was held to be authentic and basically reliable. Though not everyone realized it at the time, the death knell was struck in 1899 by Herman Dessau in a paper showing that the entire composition was the work of a single author writing centuries after the alleged authors. Dessau's argument: some of the characters mentioned in the work are fictitious and show signs of having been invented near the end of the fourth century.

In his chapter on "The Bogus Names," Syme categorizes all the cited names and authorities of the Historia Augusta, in ten categories, including the most significant: "fictitious characters who by their names reflect families eminent in the Roman aristocracy in the second half of the fourth century." He concludes that the author of the work was extremely erudite, but that he included a "profusion of details about food and drink and sex" which "were not meant to be taken seriously." Moreover, "he has his own silly or elaborate jokes." Syme's conclusion was that "this man is a kind of rogue scholar."[37]

In other cases we know full well the author of a book, but it is hard to discern a reason for the pen name. Thus Iamblichus wrote *On the Mysteries* as Abamon, but his reason is itself a mystery. T. Hopfner suggested that Iamblichus wanted to hide from his potentially Christian readers the fact that he and his fellow Neoplatonists were sometimes at odds with one another. The book, after all, is a response to Porphyry's attack on his former student for his attraction to the occult, in a letter ostensibly addressed to "Anebo," itself a name that has generated considerable discussion (is it too an invention?).[38] Hopfner's theory, however, seems rather unlikely, as Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell point out, given Iamblichus' virtually complete disregard for Christians otherwise.[39] It may simply be that he recognized Porphyry's attack leveled at an alias for himself, and he responded in kind, pretending that the fictitious Anebo was his (the fictitious Abamon's) student as a "poke in the eye" to Porphyry, his own teacher.[40]

There are other instances where a pen name may have been chosen simply to protect the identity of the real author, in cases in which safety or other personal concerns were an issue: Janssen instances Nestorius' use of the name Heraclides in his *Liber Heraclidis*.[41] At other times the use of a pen name was not innocent at all. That is Plutarch's suspicion of Xenophon, when he wrote his *Anabasis* in the name of Themistogenes, an alleged general of Syracuse. This pseudonym is often taken to be a simple pen name, chosen for no particular reason. But as Plutarch points out (*Moralia* 345e), by discussing his own military activities in the third person, as a purported outsider, Xenophon was able to give himself

greater credence and glory than if he had written the account in his own name.

In yet other instances modern scholars have erred in thinking that a work was produced under a pen name. Aristophanes is sometimes said to have written his early plays pseudonymously, but D. McDowell has argued that in fact, given the mechanics of theatrical production, Aristophanes published them under the names of the persons who directed them, as those who were ultimately responsible for their contents.[42]

Homonymity

Ancient critics recognized full well the problems posed by homonymity, in a world where many names were common and few means were available to distinguish between authors of the same name. No one took the problem more seriously than the first-century BCE Demetrius of Magnesia, who wrote his book περὶ ὁμωνύμων ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων not only to differentiate among homonymous writers, but also to tell anecdotes about them.[43] Diogenes Laertius, our principle source for the book, more commonly refers to it with the shortened title οἱ ὁμωνύμοι (e.g., 1.38.79; 7.31.169). It is cited by other authors as well, however, including Athenaeus (*Banqueters* 13.611B). An entire chapter is preserved by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

Diogenes himself often deals with the problems of authorship posed by homonymity, reporting, for example, as just one instance, that the critics Panaetius and Sosicrates maintained that of all the writings commonly attributed to Ariston of Chios, the Stoic philosopher, only the letters were authentically his. Another thirteen titles, some in multiple volumes, went under his name, but were in fact written by Ariston the Peripatetic (*Lives* 7.163). With respect to the figure with whom we started, Heraclides of Pontus, Diogenes informs us that there were thirteen other literary figures who shared the name, one of them, confusingly enough, also known as Ponticus.

As one might expect, there are times when ancient critics have difficulty resolving issues of homonymity. And so, Quintilian wavers on the rhetorical writings assigned to Hermagoras:

> There are however books ascribed to Hermagoras which support the view under discussion; but either the attribution is wrong or the author was some other Hermagoras. For how can they possibly be by the Hermagoras who wrote so much so admirably about Rhetoric, since (as is clear also from the first book of Cicero's *Rhetoric*) he divided the

> subject matter of Rhetoric into Theses and Causes? (*Institutio Oratio* 3.5.14)[44]

At other times there was less confusion, as in a case reported by Suetonius:

> For while some tell us that this same Ennius published a book "On Letters and Syllables" and another "On Metres," Lucius Cotta is right in maintaining that these were not the work of the poet but of a later Ennius, who is also the author of the volumes "On the Science of Augury." (*On Grammarians* 1.3)[45]

Numerous cases of homonymity have been uncovered only in modern times.[46]

What matters particularly for my purposes here, however, is the fact that some ancient critics posited homonymity as a chief reason that writings were transmitted under a false or wrong name, and were therefore to be termed νόθα. This is explicitly stated by the fifth-century Neoplatonist Olympiodorus, when he wants to explore διὰ πόσους τρόπους ἐνοθεύοντο τὰ βιβλία; the claim is repeated some years later by his student Elias.[47]

As is well known, the problems posed by homonymity were recognized by critics in the early Christian tradition as well. The best-known instance involved the third-century Dionysius of Alexandria, who argued that the book of Revelation was not written by the disciple John the son of Zebedee, but by some other John:

> That he was called John, and that this work is John's, I shall therefore not deny, for I agree that it is from the pen of a holy and inspired writer. But I am not prepared to admit that he was the apostle, the son of Zebedee and brother of James, who wrote the gospel entitled According to John and the general epistles. On the character of each, on the linguistic style, and on the general tone, as it is called, of Revelation, I base my opinion that the author was not the same. (Quoted in Eusebius, *H.E*. 7.25)[48]

Among other books in question were 2 and 3 John, which Jerome suggested may have been written by John the Presbyter rather than John the son of Zebedee (*Vir. ill*. 9); and the Shepherd, attributed to Hermas, but to which Hermas? Origen (*Romans Commentary* 10.31) and possibly Eusebius (*H.E*. 3.3) maintained that it

was the Hermas mentioned by Paul in Romans 16:14, putting the composition of the book back into apostolic times by a companion of the apostles, whereas the Muratorian Fragment insists that Hermas was the brother of the second-century bishop of Rome, Pius, and that it had been written “recently, in our own times.” This was the view, of course, that eventually won out. Analogously, but somewhat later, the Adamantius who wrote De recta in deum fide was sometimes understood, wrongly, to be Origen; Rufinus reworked the dialogue by altering the places that showed it was written after Origen’s day in order to use it to vindicate Origen’s orthodoxy.[49]

Anonymity

There are far fewer anonymous writings from antiquity, and from Christian antiquity, than of other kinds of writing (orthonymous, falsely ascribed, forged). The reason is quite simple: anonymous works were almost always ascribed, usually incorrectly. This is due to what Wilamowitz famously described as a *horror vacui*. Speyer goes further in speculating that when libraries were collecting works, authors were assigned to them, with the most famous representatives of each genre then being ascribed works actually written by (anonymous) others: divine hymns were attributed to Homer, fables to Aesop, medical treatises to Hippocrates, and so on.[50]

Ancient critics sometimes discussed anonymity and its reasons, as when Clement of Alexandria claimed that the apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews anonymously because he realized that he was not much appreciated by the Jewish people to whom it was addressed: “In writing to Hebrews already prejudiced against him and suspicious of him, he was far too sensible to put them off at the start by naming himself” (Eusebius *H.E.* 6.14).

It is a genuine question as to why so many of the earliest Christian writings were produced anonymously (before being attributed). Michael Wolter argues that all these anonymata are principally concerned with differentiating their views, and the Christians who held them, from Jews and their religion. The use of anonymity, in his view, allowed the authors to claim implicitly that Jesus Christ himself was the authority behind their positions. Unfortunately, Wolter does not look at all the evidence, even within the New Testament, his area of principal concern. He leaves 2 and 3 John out of consideration, for some reason, and these are certainly not chiefly concerned with the relationship of the Christian gospel to Judaism. Moreover, for other anonymous books of the New Testament, Judaism is only one of a number of concerns at best (it is a matter of

concern for Mark, but is it the *principal* reason the Gospel was written?), and for others it is not a concern at all (1 John). It might be added that if one is seeking a historical explanation for the phenomenon, it will not do to restrict oneself to canonical writings: one also needs to deal with such works as the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas, 2 Clement, and so on.

There may in fact have been a variety of reasons for Christian authors to remain anonymous. Wolter may be right that the choice was sometimes based on a desire to stress the authority of Christ himself, although that is not obvious from reading the texts. Possibly in some cases (2 and 3 John; the Didache) an author did not identify himself simply because he was already well known to the closely knit community to which he wrote. Or possibly, in the case of the Gospels, there was a generic consideration: like the histories of the people of God in the Jewish Scriptures (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings), the stories of God's work among his people, Israel, are told anonymously. The Gospels, in this view, portray Jesus as a continuation of God's historical activities.

In any event, all of New Testament anonymata and almost all other anonymous writings of the early Christian centuries came to be attributed eventually (see below). An exception such as the Letter to Diognetus can be explained on the ground that it was so little known. This early apology, for example, is never quoted in any ancient source. Books that circulated for a long time anonymously almost always were attributed. This is true, for example, of the anonymous source that Eusebius quotes to malign the Roman adoptionists in his *Ecclesiastical History* 5.28. Theodoret later named the book the Little Labyrinth and attributed it, wrongly, to Origen. Modern scholars have proved no more successful, sometimes, since Lightfoot, wrongly assigning it to Hippolytus.[51] With an anonymous book like the Didache, it may be that the attribution of the teaching to the disciples was mistakenly taken to be a claim about authorship.

False Attributions

As we will see more fully in the next chapter, ancient Greek and Roman critics were deeply concerned over the attributions of writings. As far back as the fifth century BCE, Herodotus expressed his doubts concerning the attribution of the Cyprian poems and the Cyclic poem "The Heroes' Sons" to Homer, based on their material discrepancies with the Homeric epics themselves (2.117; 4.32). Centuries later, a fellow Halicarnassan, Dionysius, indicated that works attributed to Cadmus of Miletus, Aristaeus of Proconnesus, and other historians

like them were not “universally accepted as genuine” (οὔτε . . . πιστεύονται; *On Thucydides*. 23). Quite often attributions were simply rejected off the cuff, showing that criticism was commonplace. Thus, for example, in talking about lewd songs to be publicly performed, Athenaeus quotes a passage from the work called the “Beggars,” and admits that the common attribution of the work is probably wrong: “Whoever wrote *Beggars*, generally attributed to Chionides, mentions a certain Gnesippus, playful writer of the lascivious muse …” (*Banqueters* 14:638d).[52]

As suggested earlier, attributions were sometimes simply made as a best guess or by simple mistake. This is probably the case for the attribution of the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* to Philo and the *Adversus omnes haereses* to Tertullian. The anonymous treatises *Cohortatio ad Graecos, De monarchia*, and *Oratio ad Graecos* sounded to some readers, as early as Eusebius (for at least the first two; he does not mention the *Oratio*) very much like Justin, and so they were attributed to him and were passed down in the manuscript tradition as his—wrongly, as is now known.[53] The same is true of later works that recorded the dialogues of Jerome and Augustine; they are sometimes attributed to these writers themselves, apparently on the ground that they were the principal speakers, even though they patently were not the authors.[54] Hundreds of sermons came to be attributed to Chrysostom, most of them wrongly.

In other instances attributions were not at all innocent. Whoever first thought of assigning the five books of the Torah to Moses did not do so out of purely antiquarian interests. On the Christian side, much the same can be said of the four books of the Gospels. Contrary to the extravagant claims of Martin Hengel, there is no reason to doubt that these books circulated for decades anonymously, before being attributed.[55] It is no accident that when these four books in particular—the ones in widest usage in the proto-orthodox communities—were assigned, it was to two of the disciples and two companions of the apostles. The attributions to Mark and Luke should cause no surprise. As early as Irenaeus and Tertullian we can see how the proto-orthodox logic worked: Mark gave Peter’s version of the story (cf. Papias) and Luke gave Paul’s. As Tertullian puts it: “that which Mark produced is stated to be Peter’s, whose interpreter Mark was. Luke’s narrative also they usually attribute to Paul. It is permissible for the works which disciples published to be regarded as belonging to their masters” (*Adv. Marc*. 4.5.3–4).[56] This is not to be misinterpreted—as it often is—to mean that Tertullian thought disciples could publish writings in the names of their teachers; Mark and Luke, in his opinion, published their works in their own names. But their views represent the views of their teachers. Thus the two greatest apostles

of the church stand behind the Gospel traditions of these books.

And so the fourfold Gospel was based on the testimony of two personal disciples of Jesus and of his two principal apostles. Why were attributions made at all, after the books had originally circulated anonymously? The issues were complex, but can be boiled down to matters of differentiation (which Gospel is this?) and authority (is it based on a credible source?).

Other attributions as well may have been made for ulterior purposes. The anonymous letter that was early on assigned to Barnabas represents a view of Judaism and the Jewish Law that stands very much at odds with heterodox perspectives floated about by the likes of Marcion and various groups of Gnostics in the midsecond century. The book may be vitriolic in its opposition to Jews and Judaism, but it is not harsh toward the Old Testament. Quite the contrary, the Old Testament is presented as a distinctively Christian book, misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misappropriated by the Jews. It is, in fact, for the anonymous author, Christian Scripture. This became the proto-orthodox position in opposition to heterodox alternatives, which claimed that the Old Testament was not inspired by the one true, or ultimate, God. When Christians such as Clement of Alexandria falsely claimed that the anonymous letter was in fact written by Barnabas, they ascribed to it a significant authority. But not just any authority. Since Barnabas was otherwise so closely associated with Paul, the chief apostle of Marcion and much revered in some Gnostic circles, Paul himself was, by the indirection provided by the ascription, placed on the side of the proto-orthodox in the struggle to define the Christian understanding of the Old Testament.

Plagiarism

It is sometimes stated that plagiarism was either nonexistent or nonproblematic in Greek and Roman antiquity. As a prominent publication of the Jesus Seminar tells us: “The concept of plagiarism was unknown in the ancient world.”[57] In point of fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Plagiarism was known, discussed, and condemned in ancient sources. As one of the best studies of the phenomenon, by Bernard Legras, summarizes: “In spite of the reticence of our sources and assuming that our texts are indeed admissible, we have been able to establish that plagiarism and forgery of literary works were considered offenses and punished.”[58] Legras does go on to qualify his statement: plagiarism and forgery were under legal sanction only in cases that appear to have affected the concerns of the state. There is no evidence of any proprietary laws, at any time

or place, involving the concern to keep writings in general intact and safe from borrowing, or "stealing" as the ancients called it.

The phenomenon is in any event not unknown to our sources, as we have already seen in the case of Heraclides Ponticus, who, according to Diogenes Laertius, not only published extensively works of his own but also occasionally published works of others as if he had written them: "Chameleon complains that Heraclides's treatise on the works of Homer and Hesiod was plagiarized (κλέψαντα αὐτόν) from his own."[59] This was plagiarism by a man who, strikingly, wrote two separate treatises περὶ ἀρετῆς. Or consider his Athenian predecessor Aeschines, who stole dialogues of Socrates after the great man's death and was calumniated for it on more than one occasion, especially by Menedemus of Eretria, who claimed that "most of the dialogues which Aeschines passed off as his own were really dialogues of Socrates obtained by him from [Socrates's wife] Xanthippe. Moreover Aeschines made use (fraudulently: ἐσκευώρηται) of the *Little Cyrus*, the *Lesser Heracles*, and the *Alcibiades* of Antisthenes as well as dialogues by other authors" (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 2.60).

At other times authors complained about writers who plagiarized their own work, none more memorably than Martial: "You mistake, you greedy thief of my works, who think you can become a poet at no more than the cost of a transcript and a cheap papyrus roll. Applause is not acquired for six or ten sesterces" (*Epigrams* 1, 66).[60]

When plagiarism was detected in antiquity, it often had actual social repercussions. Thus Vitruvius recounts an incident involving Aristophanes of Byzantium, one of the judges of a literary contest staged by the King of Pergamum to celebrate the dedication of his famed library. Aristophanes, we are told, had "read every book in the library," and when the authors who presented their work were judged, he ruled that only one was worthy of the prize, to the consternation of the other judges and the king. But Aristophanes demonstrated that except for the one, all the "others recited borrowed work whereas the judges had to deal with originals, not with plagiaries [ceteros aliena recitavisse; oportere autem iudicantes non furta sed scripta probare]."[61] The king was more than a little dubious about the claim, and so Aristophanes proceeded to quote passages from books in the library to prove his point. The result, Vitruvius tells us, was that the plagiarizers were forced "to confess they were thieves [coegit ipsos furatos de se confitieri]. The king then ordered them to be brought to trial for theft. They were condemned and in disgrace, while Aristophanes was raised to high office and became librarian" (Book 7, Preface 7).

On occasion the condemnation for plagiarism led to even harsher reactions.

Thus we learn of the expulsion of Empedocles from the school of Pythagoras, on the grounds of plagiarism: “Timaeus in the ninth book of his *Histories* says he [Empedocles] was a pupil of Pythagoras, adding that, having been convicted at that time of stealing his discourses (λέγων ὅτι καταγνωσθεὶς ἐπὶ λογοκλοπίᾳ τότε) he was, like Plato, excluded from taking part in the discussions of the school.” (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 8.54).

Elsewhere Vitruvius himself delivers a stringent judgment on those who engaged in the practice of plagiarism: “While, then, these men [viz. Those who left a written record of past events and philosophies] deserve our gratitude, on the other hand we must censure those who plunder their works and appropriate them to themselves” (Book 7, Preface 3). This attitude coincides with other ancient discourse about the practice, as in Polybius’ off-the-cuff comment on authors who discuss “genealogies, myths, the planting of colonies, the foundations of cities and their ties of kinship”; Polybius laments the fact that since so much has already been written about such things, a modern writer who discusses them either rehashes what others have said or worse, “represents the work of others as being his own,” a procedure that he calls “a most disgraceful proceeding” (ὃ πάντων ἐστὶν αἴσχιστον).[62]

Equally harsh is Pliny the Elder, who in his *Natural History* discusses his own practices of citation in contrast to those who are “of a perverted mind and a bad disposition” and steal the work of others to pass off as their own (*Natural History*, Preface 20–23):

> For I consider it to be courteous and to indicate an ingenuous modesty, to acknowledge the sources whence we have derived assistance, and not to act as most of those have done whom I have examined. For I must inform you, that in comparing various authors with each other, I have discovered, that some of the most grave and of the latest writers have transcribed, word for word, from former works, without making any acknowledgement; … For it is indeed the mark of a perverted mind and a bad disposition, to prefer being caught in a theft to returning what we have borrowed (obnoxii profecto animi et infelicis ingenii est deprehendi in furto malle quam mutuum redder).[63]

It is a genuine question concerning how relevant the ancient discourse on plagiarism is to the “unacknowledged borrowings” found throughout the early Christian literature. Assuming the two-source hypothesis, Matthew and Luke both acquired considerable amounts of their material, often verbatim, from Mark

and Q, without acknowledgment. But if plagiarism is defined as taking over the work of another and claiming it as one's own, possibly the charge does not apply in these cases, as all the writings in question are anonymous. That is to say, the later Synoptic authors are not claiming anything as their own, as they do not even name themselves. The same would apply to the extensive and often verbatim reproduction of the Protevangelium Jacobi in such later texts as the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, in that the later author does not claim the earlier work as his own, since he is, in fact, writing pseudonymously.

A comparable situation obtains in the wholesale incorporation of the Didascalia Apostolorum, the Didache, and the Apostolic Traditions in the fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions. But here the situation is somewhat more complex. Two of these earlier works are anonymous, making it difficult to give credit where credit was due. The Didascalia, on the other hand, was inherited as a forgery—it falsely claims to be written by the apostles—and is itself embedded in another work that is also a forgery, also allegedly written by the apostles. Why would a forger need to credit an earlier work that he allegedly (but in fact did not) write himself?[64] Or consider the case of 2 Peter and Jude. There is little doubt that the former borrowed a good deal of the latter in its polemic against nefarious but unidentifiable opponents. But the source of the argument is a forgery, as is the text that uses the source. Can a forger commit plagiarism? In one sense he obviously has borrowed the work of another without acknowledgment, or as the ancient sources would put it, he has "stolen" his work. But in another sense he has not claimed that work as his own, since he does not give his own name so as to take credit for what his stolen material says. In all these instances we are dealing with complex literary relations that do not neatly line up in taxonomies of fraudulence, either ancient or modern.

Fabrications

It is widely thought that the invention of speeches and faux documents in historical narratives, and the creation of historical narratives themselves, are analogous to literary forgery. In all such instances an author fabricates materials and passes them off as historical when in fact they are products of his own imagination, much as a forger writes a work claiming to be someone else, possibly imagining, or purporting, that what he says is what the other person would have said had he had the opportunity. Sometimes it is inferred that since the fabrication of, say, speeches in historical narratives was seen as an acceptable practice, the forging of writings in the names of others must have been seen as

acceptable as well. In the next chapter we will see that this leap of logic is an entirely modern one, as ancients are consistently negative in their appraisal of literary forgery. For now, it is enough to note that even with respect to fabrication there was not a consistent and universal opinion among ancient writers.

For the general approbation of historians who invented the speeches of their protagonists, appeal is normally made to the comments of Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War:*

> As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to begin the war or when they were already engaged therein, it has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports. Therefore the speeches are given in the language in which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said.[65]

The practice of one historian, of course, does not necessarily reflect the practices of an era. But also to be considered is the sheer force of the ancient historians' dilemma: they needed, or at least wanted, to incorporate speeches in their accounts but usually had no means whatsoever of knowing what was actually spoken on the occasion. Moreover, there are other less frequently cited comments in our sources that reflect a similar attitude. And so, for example, Fronto mentions the practice of historians and annalists inventing letters thought to be appropriate to the occasion: "There are extant letters in both languages, partly written by actual leaders, partly composed by the writers of histories or annals, such as that most memorable letter in Thucydides of the general Nicias sent from Sicily."[66]

And as Cicero has his character Brutus state, when disagreeing with the first-person narrator's description of the death of Coriolanus: "At this he smiled and said: 'As you like, since the privilege is conceded to rhetoricians to distort history in order to give more point to their narrative' (concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historias, ut aliquid dicere possint argutius)" (*Brutus*, 11.42).[67]

Other authors, however, were willing to concede this privilege *only* to rhetoricians, not to historians, whose task it was to record what actually

happened in the past—speeches and all—rather than to invent words and deeds that simply seemed appropriate. No one expressed this alternative view more forcefully than Polybius, whose comments are directed against the historian Phylarchus, whose account of the Cleomenic War took very much a Thucydidian approach to speeches, much to Polybius' chagrin and even outrage:

> This sort of thing he keeps up throughout his history, always trying to bring horrors vividly before our eyes. Leaving aside the ignoble and womanish character of such a treatment of his subject, let us consider how far it is proper or serviceable to history (τὸ δὲ τῆς ἱστορίας οἰκεῖον ἅμα καὶ χρήσιμον ἐξεταζέσθω). A historical author should not try to thrill his readers by such exaggerated pictures, nor should he, like a tragic poet, try to imagine the probable utterances of his characters or reckon up all the consequences probably incidental to the occurrences with which he deals, but simply record what really happened and what really was said (ῥηθέντων κατ' ἀλήθειαν αὐτῶν), however commonplace. For the object of tragedy is not the same as that of history but quite the opposite. The tragic poet should thrill and charm his audience for the moment by the verisimilitude of the words he puts into his characters' mouths, but it is the task of the historian to instruct and convince for all time serious students by the truth of the facts and the speeches he narrates, since in the one case it is the probable that takes precedence, even if it be untrue, in the other it is the truth, the purpose being to confer benefit on learners.[68]

Later in his *Histories* Polybius similarly maligns the historian Timaeus for using rhetorical flourishes in the speeches he provides his characters, rather than indicating what was "really" said:

> As the proverb tells us that a single drop from the largest vessel suffices to tell us the nature of the whole contents, so we should regard the subject now under discussion. When we find one or two false statements in a book and they prove to be deliberate ones, it is evident that not a word written by such an author is any longer certain and reliable. But to convince those also who are disposed to champion him I must speak of the principle on which he composes public speeches, harangues to soldiers, the discourses of ambassadors, and, in a word, all utterances of the kind, which, as it were, sum up events and hold the whole history

> together. Can anyone who reads these help noticing that Timaeus had untruthfully reported them in his work, and has done so of set purpose? For he has not set down the words spoken nor the sense of what was really said, but having made up his mind as to what ought to have been said, he recounts all these speeches and all else that follows upon events like a man in a school of rhetoric attempting to speak on a given subject, and shows off his oratorical power, but gives no report of which was actually spoken. The peculiar function of history is to discover, in the first place, the words actually spoken, whatever they were, and next to ascertain the reason why what was done or spoken led to failure or success.… But a writer who passes over in silence the speeches made and the causes of events and in their place introduces false rhetorical exercises and discursive speeches, destroys the peculiar virtue of history. And of this Timaeus especially is guilty, and we all know that his work is full of blemishes of the kind.[69]

At the very least, then, we can say that there was not a consistent view of the legitimacy of the practice of fabricating materials for historical accounts in antiquity. Whereas some writers—Thucydides, and the two objects of Polybius' scorn—accepted the practice, probably out of historiographic necessity, others strenuously objected. The vitriol of Polybius' protest may well suggest that he was in the minority on the matter. In neither side of the debate, in any event, do we find authors likening the practice to forgery. When Jewish authors such as Josephus, or Christian authors such as the anonymous and pseudonymous writers of various Christian Gospels, placed invented speeches on the lips of their protagonists, they were doing what was widely done throughout antiquity. Some writers approved the practice and others demurred.

Speeches and documents are not the only kinds of fabrications in historical writing. Often writers—historians, essayists, polemicists, or most anyone else—fabricated narratives of all sorts about real and fictitious characters: events, episodes, activities, controversies, practices, and on and on. We have seen a small sliver of this kind of fabricating narrative already with Epiphanius, who appears to have invented the ritual practices of the Phibionites, possibly based on his slight knowledge of their theological views, precisely in order to malign them. In generating such fabricated accounts, Epiphanius stood in a solid line of tradition that goes back as far as our earliest heresiologists. The harsh but undocumented invectives of the letter of Jude in the New Testament come to be fleshed out in its later ideological successors, such as Irenaeus, whose *Adversus*

Haereses is the first proto-orthodox heresiological treatise to survive, and which is famous for its accusations against the shocking sexual practices of, for example, the Valentinians, Carpocratians, and Marcosians that I have already mentioned. As I suggested earlier, if one considers the rigorous ethic endorsed by the Gnostic sources themselves, it seems unlikely that any of the charges represent accurate representations; they are more likely fabricated.

Not all early Christian fabrications were malicious, of course. Long before we have any written texts of any kind, stories about Jesus were not only altered in the course of oral transmission, but also generated then: stories about his birth, his activities, his teachings, his controversies, his last days, his death and resurrection. And the fabrications continued long after the New Testament period, as so abundantly and irrefutably attested in the noncanonical accounts of his birth, life, death, and resurrection. And of his afterlife, as in Tertullian's claim that:

> So Tiberius, in whose reign the name of Christian entered the world, hearing from Palestine in Syria information which had revealed the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the Senate, with previous indication of his own approval. The Senators, on the ground that they had not verified the facts, rejected it. Caesar maintained his opinion and threatened dire measures against those who brought accusations against the Christians.[70]

This fabricated account was easily believed by later Christians; it is reiterated by Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.2.2). Further examples could be effortlessly multiplied many times over, for instance, from virtually every detail in the letters and narratives of the so-called Pilate cycle.[71]

So too the preliterary accounts of the apostles eventually embedded in the canonical Acts have their analogues in the later apocryphal Acts, whether stories of Peter raising a smoked tuna from the dead and depriving the magician Simon of his powers of flight in midair, or of John resuscitating Drusiana and castigating pestiferous bed bugs, or of Paul preaching a message of sexual abstinence that leads to the conversion of his most famous female follower, Thecla.

This final example is commonly cited in works dealing with forgery, by scholars who confuse Tertullian's comments in De baptismo 17 as referring to a presbyter of Asia Minor who allegedly forged the account in Paul's name. Thus, for example, the recent comment from an otherwise fine article by M.

Frenschkowski : “This passage [in Tertullian] is significant not least of all because it once and for all disproves the myth of the unproblematic acceptance of pseudepigraphy in a Christian environment.”[72] In fact, Tertullian’s comments are not directly relevant to the question of whether or not forgery was widely seen as acceptable. The presbyter in question was charged not with forging an account but with fabricating it.

> But if the writings which wrongly go under Paul’s name, claim Thecla’s example as a licence for women’s teaching and baptizing, let them know that, in Asia, the presbyter who composed that writing, as if he were augmenting Paul’s fame from his own store, after being convicted, and confessing that he had done it from love of Paul, was removed from his office (sciant in asia presbyterum qui eam scripturam construxit quasi titulo pauli de suo cumulans conuictum atque confessum id se amore pauli fecisse loco decessisse).[73]

The reconstruction of Tertullian’s text is debated,[74] but the question of the presbyter’s crime need not be. The “writings that wrongly go under Paul’s name” were not accounts that Paul was alleged to have written. He was the subject of these writings, not the reputed author. At least as they have been handed down to us—assuming that what we have is what Tertullian is referring to[75]—the Acts are anonymous. The presbyter was being faulted, then, for making up stories about Paul that were not historically accurate.

In other instances the narrative fabrications of the early Christians served polemical purposes, although at times more subtly. As already pointed out, for example, stories of Jesus as a miracle-working wunderkind from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas functioned to discount an adoptionistic Christology that claimed that Jesus received his divine sonship—and so his divine power—only at his baptism. The story of Jesus emerging from his tomb as tall as a mountain from the Gospel of Peter functioned to show that his resurrection was decidedly bodily, in the face of claims that his afterlife was purely in the spirit, while his body experienced corruption. Stories of Peter besting Simon Magus in a series of miracle-working contests from the Acts of Peter illustrated the superiority of the proto-orthodox lineage of the Roman episcopacy over against various groups of Gnostic contenders. Stories of Pilate, Tiberius, and other Roman officials recognizing the clear divinity of Jesus from the Pilate Cycle functioned to counter the polemical charges of the cultured despisers of the new faith among the pagans, such as Celsus and Porphyry.

Christian fabrications served other purposes as well. Some satisfied early Christian curiosity about unknown aspects of the lives of Jesus and his followers (where was Jesus, exactly, during the time between his death and resurrection? Thus the Gospel of Nicodemus); others provided edificatory tales (God was on the side of the apostles in the face of horrible Roman opposition, as in the Apocryphal Acts); yet others were no doubt entertaining (Jesus' miraculous deeds as the mischievous five-year-old son of God in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas); some more directly supported one theological or ideological view or another (Paul's preaching of continence for eternal life, in the Acts of Thecla); and others performed apologetic service (the stories of the Protevangelium as answers to the charges against Mary, Joseph, and Jesus on the pen of Celsus).

Given their wide functionality, were such invented narratives generally seen as acceptable by the early Christians? On one hand, most Christians who heard such stories almost certainly did not consider them as anything but historical, and so were in no position to pass judgment on their character as fabrications. What would they have said if they were shown, beyond any reasonable doubt, that such stories were made up? At the end of the day, it is impossible to say. But it does seem likely that Christians who approved of the stories and the lessons they conveyed would not have been particularly disturbed, taking, possibly, a Thucydidian attitude toward them. Christians with alternative perspectives, on the other hand, or non-Christians of all stripes would doubtless have considered such fabrications worthy of attack, more along the lines of a Polybius.

Falsifications

Even more closely related to the phenomenon of forgery is the practice of falsifying a text. When an author forges a writing, claiming to be someone other than who she is, she asserts that her words are those of another. So too a copyist who alters a text by adding a few words, or by interpolating entire passages, or by rewriting the text in other ways, is making the implicit claim that his own words—the ones he has interpolated or generated himself—are the words of the author of the (rest of the) text.

Textual alteration was widely discussed in antiquity, and just as widely condemned. Our earliest reference appears to be in Herodotus, who mentions a collector of oracles named Onomacritus, friend and counselor of the tyrant Pisistratus, who earlier in his life had been discovered to have inserted an oracle of his own into the verses of Musaeus, to the effect that the islands off Lemnos would disappear under water. Lasus of Hermione, a poet and musician who was

Pindar’s teacher, evidently suspected Onomacritus of making the interpolation and reported it to Hipparchus, who promptly banished Onomacritus from Athens.[76]

Onomacritus had a wide reputation for interpolating oracles into the alleged writings of Musaeus. Pausanias, for example, gives another instance: “I have read a poem in which Mousaios was able to fly, by the gift of the North-east wind; I think Onomakritos wrote it; nothing of Mousaios exists for certain except the *Hymn to Demeter*.”[77] And Plutarch as well: “I forbear to mention how much blame men like Onomacritus, Prodicus, and Cinaethon have brought upon themselves from the oracles by foisting upon them a tragic diction and a grandiloquence of which they have had no need, nor have I any kindly feeling toward their changes.”[78] Even the Christian Clement recounts the by then traditional view: “Onomacritus of Athens, the reputed author of the poems attributed to Orpheus, is to be found in the reign of the Pisistratides *circa* the fiftieth Olympiad” (*Stromateis 1.21*).[79]

Strabo reports on an earlier Athenian textual alteration, this time in Homer’s Iliad. In this case the falsification, made either by Pisistratus or Solon, had clear political implications, as it supported the Athenians’ claim to the island of Salamis:

> At the present time the island is held by the Athenians, although in early times there was strife between them and the Megarians for its possession. Some say that it was Peisistratus, others Solon, who inserted in the *Catalogue of Ships* immediately after the verse, “and Aias brought twelve ships from Salamis,” [Iliad 2, 557] the verse, “and, bringing them, halted them where the battalions of the Athenians were stationed,” and then used the poet as a witness that the island had belonged to the Athenians from the beginning. But the critics do not accept this interpretation, because many of the verses bear witness to the contrary.[80]

Sometimes writings were falsified for philosophical rather than political reasons. Diogenes Laertius, for example, reports that the librarian of Pergamum, the Stoic Athenodorus, was condemned at trial for falsifying Stoic writings by deleting problematic passages from Zeno, founder of the sect:

> Isidorus likewise affirms that the passages disapproved by the [Stoic] school were expunged from his [Zeno’s] works by Athenodorus the

> Stoic, who was in charge of the Pergameme library; and that afterwards, when Athenodorus was detected and compromised (φωραθέντος τοῦ Ἀθηνοδώρου καὶ κινδυνεύσαντος), they were replaced. So much concerning the passages in his writings which are regarded as spurious (περὶ τῶν ἀθετουμένων αὐτοῦ). (*Lives*, 7.34)

The falsification of texts of Homer, of course, generated early classical scholarship, especially as associated with the library in Alexandria.[81]

Falsification of texts was also a matter hotly contested within Christian circles of the first four centuries. Heretics were roundly and widely condemned for altering the texts of Scripture in light of their own doctrines.[82] Among the earliest and most vitriolic accusers was Tertullian, who famously assaulted Marcion on these grounds:

> I say that mine is true: Marcion makes that claim for his. I say that Marcion's is falsified: Marcion says the same of mine. Who shall decide between us? Only such a reckoning of dates, as will assume that authority belongs to that which is found to be older, and will prejudge as corrupt that which is convicted of having come later. For in so far as the false is a corruption of the true, to that extent must the truth have preceded that which is false. An object must have been in existence before anything is done to it, as what it is in itself must be prior to any opposition to it. … Certainly that is why he has expunged all the things that oppose his view, that are in accord with the Creator, on the plea that they have been woven in by his partisans; but has retained those that accord with his opinion.[83]

As is clear, Marcion leveled the same charges against his own theological opponents, deemed as well to preserve false teachings.

False teachers were known to alter the texts not only of Scripture but also of any work that might prove harmful to their cause. And so the complaint of Dionysius of Corinth with respect to his own writings:

> When my fellow-Christians invited me to write letters to them I did so. These the devil's apostles have filled with tares, taking away some things and adding others. For them the woe is reserved. Small wonder then if some have dared to tamper even with the word of the Lord

> Himself, when they have conspired to mutilate my own humble efforts. (quoted in Eusebius *H.E.* 4, 23, 12)

Or the charges of Rufinus against heretical falsifiers who corrupted the writings of church authorities who opposed them:

> The heretics have followed this example of their father and this skill of their teacher. Whenever they have found treatises by renowned writers of old that have discussed things that pertain to the glory of God in detail and faithfully, so that every believer could make progress and receive instruction by reading them, they have not spared their writings, but have poured in the poisonous filth of their own doctrines, whether by interpolating what they had said, or by inserting things that they had not said. By this means, of course, the assertion of the man's own heresy was more easily advanced under the names of all the most learned and renowned among the ecclesiastical writers in view of the fact that some brilliant men among the Catholics appeared to have thought likewise.[84]

The normal way of falsifying a text was simply by altering it in the process of re-copying it. A particularly egregious example is cited by Origen with respect to the transcript of one of his debates:

> For a certain author of a heresy, when a discussion was held between us in the presence of many persons and was recorded, took the document from those who had written it down. He added what he wanted to it, removed what he wanted, and changed what seemed good to him. Then he carried it around as if it were from me, pouring scorn conspicuously on the things that he himself had composed. The brethren who are in Palestine were indignant over this. They sent a man to me at Athens who was to receive from me the authentic copy. Prior to this I had not even re-read or revised the work, but it was lying there in such a neglected state that it could hardly be found. But I sent it, and I say with God as my witness that, when I met the man who had falsified the work, [and asked him] why he had done this, he answered, as if he were giving me satisfaction: "Because I wanted to adorn and purify that discussion."[85]

Clearly, falsifiers of the text, like others who engaged in one kind of literary

deception or another, felt both justified in what they did and offended by those who took umbrage. On other occasions falsifiers could be remarkably crafty, as in the case discussed by Rufinus about a manuscript containing the writings of Athanasius. It is a complicated story. Bishop Damasus was seeking to reconcile the Apollinarians to the rest of the church and had a theological treatise drawn up that could be agreed on by all sides. In this treatise, the term "Homo Dominicus" was applied to Christ, but the Apollinarists objected on the ground that it was a novelty, not part of the sanctioned terminology of their theological forebears. The author of the document attempted to defend himself by appealing to an earlier writing of Athanasius, which also used the term. But a representative of the Apollinarists found a way to undercut the precedent that this writing presented:

> When he had received the manuscript, he devised an unprecedented method of falsification. He erased the very passage in which the words were found, and then wrote in again the same words that he had erased. He returned the manuscript, and it was accepted as is.
>
> The debate about this very expression is stirred up once again; the manuscript is brought forward as evidence; the expression in question is found in it, but in a position where there had been an erasure in the manuscript. The man who brought forward the manuscript is discredited, since the erasure seemed to be proof of corruption and falsification.[86]

No one was more famously connected with the alteration of inherited theological writings than Rufinus, who explicitly tells his readers that while translating the works of Origen he came upon passages that, in his opinion, could not have actually been written by him. His obvious solution to the problem was to return the texts to their pristine state by eliminating the offensive passages. As he states the matter in the Preface to his translation of *De principiis:*

> Wherever, therefore, I have found in his books anything contrary to the reverent statements made by him about the Trinity in other places, I have either omitted it as a corrupt and interpolated passage, or reproduced it in a form that agrees with the doctrine which I have often found him affirming elsewhere.[87]

Or as he says in his *Apology to Anastasius:*

> I used my own discretion in cutting out not a few passages; but only those as to which I had come to suspect that the thing had not been so stated by Origen himself; and the statement appeared to me in these cases to have been inserted by others, because in other places I had found the author state the matter in a catholic sense.[88]

And so we have the grounds for one of the vitriolic exchanges with Jerome, who responds to such editorial activity with characteristic zeal:

> I wish to know who gave you permission to cut out a number of passages from the work you were translating? You were asked to turn a Greek book into Latin, not to correct it; to draw out another man's words, not to write a book of your own. You confess, by the fact of pruning away so much, that you did not do what you were asked. You say that you have cut out many things from the Greek, but you say nothing of what you have put in. Were the parts cut out good or bad? Bad, I suppose. Was what you kept good or bad? Good, I presume; for you could not translate the bad.… It is a strange thing if you are to act like an unjust censor, who is himself guilty of the crime, and are allowed at your will to expel some from the Senate and keep others in it.[89]

The widespread disapprobation of altering texts does not appear to have done much to stop copyists from engaging in such activities. One might nonetheless wonder what steps were taken to ensure the integrity of a text once put in circulation. The reality is that not much could be done. Occasionally there was legislation designed to protect against textual falsifications. The best known is the instance recounted in Pseudo-Plutarch's *Lycurgus*, the Athenian orator who urged passage of the law that the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were to be kept in a public archive, and that public officials were to use these official copies to check all performances in order to guarantee that there were no departures from the text. Any actor who did not stick closely to the "official" script was allegedly barred from further appearances on the stage.

This instance was the exception to the ancient rule. Without laws governing literary property, texts could be protected only by the relatively ineffective ploys of moral suasion and literary curses. Of curses, the best known is the conclusion to the Apocalypse of John:

> I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to them the plagues that are described in this book; and if anyone removes any of the words of the book of this prophecy, God will remove his share from the tree of life and from the holy city that is described in this book. (Rev. 22:19)[90]

Description of an analogous curse can be found in Jewish circles in the Letter of Aristeas. Once the translators of the Septuagint had miraculously produced their text, the leaders of the Jewish community are reported to have decided that its wording was never to be changed: “There was general approval of what they said, and they commanded that a curse should be laid, as was their custom, on anyone who should alter the version by any addition or change to any part of the written text, or any deletion either.”[91]

Note the words: “as was their custom.” Such curses were typical, not unusual. They recur in Christian writings of our period, for example in Irenaeus’ now lost *Ogdoad*, as quoted by Eusebius:

> If, dear reader, you should transcribe this little book, I adjure you by the Lord Jesus Christ and by His glorious advent, when He comes to judge the living and the dead, to compare your transcript and correct it carefully by this copy, from which you have made your transcript. This adjuration likewise you must transcribe and include in your copy. (*H.E.* 5.20)

Or in the lesser known but equally threatening comment near the conclusion of the Coptic *History of Joseph the Carpenter* : “Whoever takes away from these words or adds to them, and so considers me a liar, I will soon take vengeance on him” (30.7).[92]

It should be clear on a number of grounds that the alteration of texts was widely condemned in antiquity by authors who were pagan, Jewish, and Christian. Writers did not want copyists or editors to alter their words. They chastised and cursed anyone who did so. When falsifiers were detected in the act, they were censured, abused, and sometimes punished. An author’s words were to be kept intact, because they were the author’s own.

If authors objected to having words wrongly placed on their pens by falsifiers, it does not take much to imagine how they would react to words wrongly placed

on their pens by forgers. In these instances a deceptive writer does not merely interpolate or alter the words of a text, implicitly claiming them to be the words of the author; he instead invents a text out of whole cloth, claiming that it presents the words of the author falsely named. In both cases the question is whether the written text derives from the person who is being claimed as its author.

1. See, for example, the authors mentioned in note 32 on p. 78 and on pp. 128–32.

2. “Die Begriffe Pseudepigraphie und Pseudonymität sind nicht einfach synonym zu gebrauchen. Bei der Pseudonymität wird ein fiktiver Autor gewählt, bei der Pseudepigraphie wird das Werk einem realen Autor zugeschrieben.” In “Von Paulus zu ‘Paulus,’” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 376.

3. I am quite aware of the problems posed by the notion of “intention.” When Wimsatt and Beardslee first presented their claims about the “intentional fallacy,” it was to explain and justify some of the hermeneutical principles of the “new criticism” (see W. K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*, Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1954). Their concerns were principally literary, not historiographic. Philosophers as well have devoted considerable attention to the problem, and the issues obviously do have clear historiographic implications. In the second edition of my book *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, I set forth in greater detail my views of the matter, specifically, of how historians who recognize the theoretical problems with reconstructing past intentions can nonetheless use the category of “intention” as a functional category (*Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., New York: Oxford University, 2011, pp. 32–33 and 337–41). Here I am going a step further to claim that reasonable assumptions about (past) intention can be made. A good example of how historians can proceed is provided by Jason BeDuhn, “The Historical Assessment of Speech Acts: Clarifications of Austin and Skinner for the Study of Religions” in *MTSR* 12 (2000): 477–505. At the end of the day, persons both past and present have always had intentions, whether these are (completely) accessible or not. For BeDuhn, reconstructing intentions is a matter of establishing reasonable probabilities. The same can be said, of course, of all historical work: history as an act of “establishing the past” is itself nothing but plausible reconstruction.

4. “… macht die Täuschungsabsicht, die jenseits eines literarischen Zweckes liegt, ein Pseudepigraphon zur Fälschung.” *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 94.

5. “Nur wo Täuschungsabsicht, also dolus malus, vorliegt, wird der Tatbestand der Fälschung erfüllt. Insofern gehört die Fälschung zur Lüge.” Ibid., p. 13.

6. Armin Daniel Baum, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum*, WUNT 138 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 11–12. Someone familiar not with Baum’s work but only with his title might wonder how his book differs from mine. Baum’s overarching concerns involve the question of canon. Given the fact—which he establishes forcefully—that ancient persons, including Christians, considered forgery to be lying, is it possible that Scripture could contain any forgeries? This simply is not my concern. One of Baum’s subsidiary concerns is to establish that a book that was not authored by the person named is not a forgery if its contents can be traced back directly to that person. That is a matter on which we disagree, for reasons that will be evident in the course of my study. See especially pp. 87–90.

7. *Prolegomena;* CAG XII/1, 13, 4–14, 4. Greek text and German translation in Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 239–41.

8. There may be some confusion over how the term is used in one of our key authors, Eusebius, since in his famous account of canonical writings in *H.E.* 3.25 he lists the Shepherd of Hermas as a νόθον, a seemingly inappropriate term for an orthonymous writing. But in fact the term may be entirely appropriate, since Eusebius seems to have followed his hero Origen in assuming that the Hermas claimed as the book’s author was to be identified as the companion of Paul from Romans 16:14 (*H.E.* 3.3). Eusebius may have “known” that the author was not “that” Hermas, and therefore the book—along with the Acts of Paul, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Didache of the Apostles, and Barnabas—is not by the person named. Like these others, then, it is a νόθον, not fathered by the person named as its author. David Nienhuis (*Not By Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon*, Waco: Baylor University, 2007, p. 65) is off the mark when he thinks that Eusebius means that the Shepherd is not a “legitimate offspring of the historic, apostolic church.” This understanding stretches the meaning of the term in an idiosyncratic direction, failing to consider its typical usage both in Eusebius and in the broader Greco-Roman world. The term refers to authorship, not to standing within a religious tradition.

9. We will consider a host of examples later. For now it is enough to cite the suggestion (not meant in humor) of I. Howard Marshall, that instead of pseudonymity and pseudepigraphy—terms that employ the suggestion of falsehood—we use the more neutral terms allonymity and allopigraphy. His

suggestion is rooted in his belief that if someone other than Paul wrote the Pastoral epistles, he did not mean to deceive anyone about it. I will have more to say about that—I think he is precisely wrong—in a later chapter. For now, I might simply ask which set of terms is true to the ancient discourse about the phenomenon and which one injects modern sensitivities into it. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), pp. 83–84.

0. It should not be objected that since the Ascension of Isaiah is being recorded by Sebna the Scribe (1.5) Isaiah cannot be the author. Sebna is allegedly taking dictation in some form, as typically happened when authors "wrote" books. When the account turns to the first person, it is clear that Isaiah himself is doing the dictation. But this is simply an authorial ploy, a claim to be Isaiah by someone living 850 years later.

1. Stephen Gero, "The Infancy Gospel of Thomas: A Study of the Textual and Literary Problems," *NovT* 13 (1971): 46–80, esp. p. 59.

2. See the discussion on pp. 505–6.

3. "Die zuletzt genannte Form der Schriftstellerei, bei der ein Gott als der Urheber des schriftlichen Denkmals angesehen wird, kann als mythische oder 'religiöse Pseudepigraphie' bezeichnet werden. 'Echt' ist sie so lange, wie der Glaube an einen Gott als Offenbarer lebendig erlebt wird.… 'echte' religiöse Pseudepigraphie [konnte] nur noch dort auftreten, wohin die rationale Denkweise noch nicht gedrungen war, das heißt vornehmlich in den Randgebieten der griechisch-römischen Welt." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 36.

4. "Daraus hat sich ergeben, daß eine große Anzahl psn Schriften nur aus religiösen und religions-psychologischen Entstehungsgründen zu erklären ist. Aus der Eigenart mythischen Denkens und echter religiöser Ergriffenheit gewinnt der Verfasser für sein Vorgehen eine solche Überzeugungskraft, daß von bewusster Täuschung keine Rede sein kann, ja daß ihm die moralische Wahrheitsfrage gar nicht zum Problem wird und er darum seine Entlarvung nicht befürchten konnte." Josef A. Sint, *Pseudonymität im Altertum: Ihre Formen und ihre Gründe* (Innsbruck: Universitätverlag Wagner, 1960), p. 163.

5. Speyer claims that one can determine if a writing falls under the category based on "observations concerning language, style, composition and not least of all the psychology of such a writing" (Beobachtung von Sprache, Stil, Komposition und nicht zuletzt der Psychologie einer derartigen Schrift; p. 37). But he never explains the criteria that are to be used in making the judgment on these, or any other, grounds. As a result, the corpus of "genuine religious pseudepigrapha" appears to be a group of writings determined on the basis of a critic's "best guess."

6. “Donc, l’hypothèse de la pseudépigraphie religieuse qui est ‘echt’ est non seulement gratuite, elle est inutile.” E. J. Bickerman, “Faux littéraires dans l’antiquité classique en marge d’un livre récent,” in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), p. 197.

7. Horst R. Balz, “Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie im Urchristentum: Überlegungen zum literarischen und theologischen Problem der urchristlichen und gemeinantiken Pseudepigraphie,” *ZTK* 66 (1969): 412–13.

8. Pier Franco Beatrice, “Forgery, Propaganda and Power in Christian Antiquity,” *JAC.E* 33 (2002): 45.

9. K. Aland, “The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian Literature of the First Two Centuries,” *JBL* 12 (1961): 44.

0. Ibid., pp. 44–45.

1. Ibid., pp. 48.

2. “Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie,” p. 419.

3. David G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 43; italics his.

4. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, p. 72; cf. p. 102 and passim. Italics his.

5. *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), p. 66.

6. Harry Y. Gamble, “Pseudonymity and the New Testament Canon,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphy und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 359, 361.

7. See n. 35 below.

8. R. Hercher, *Epistolographi Graeci* (Paris: A. F. Didot, 1873; reprinted Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1965); C. D. N. Costa, *Greek Fictional Letters* (New York: Oxford, 2001); Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Other useful studies include Herwig Görgemanns, “Epistolography,” *Brill’s New Pauly* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); M. Hose, *Kleine griechische Literaturgeschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999); M. Luther Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

9. Costa, *Greek Fictional Letters*, p. xiv.

0. There are debates over the genre of the “epistolary novel,” that is, the use of fictional letters in order to create a coherent narrative. Rosenmeyer, for example, contends that there is only one set of letters that fits the description, the letters of Chion. (This obviously raises the question of how a genre with one literary representative is actually a genre.) Hose, *Kleine griechische Literaturgeschichte*

finds seven.

1. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*, p. 195.

2. Ibid., p. 207.

3. Ibid., p. 202.

4. Martina Janssen, “Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 131–35.

5. This is the argument of the editor of the major critical edition, Claude W. Barlow, *Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam* (Rome: American Academy, 1938): “Although the emphasis in a rhetor’s school was upon oratory and the characteristic method of attaining oratorical perfection was by discussion and declamation, it seems nevertheless that writing as well as speaking must have formed a part of the training. The Correspondence between Seneca and St. Paul might then be considered as an exercise on a fictitious subject assigned by the teacher. … The possibility should also be mentioned that the Correspondence is the work of more than one hand, perhaps of two or three scholars in the same school, working in competition on a set problem” (p. 92). I owe this reference to Pablo Molina. See further discussion on pp. 520–27 below.

6. Syme, *Emperors and Biography*, pp. 1–16.

7. See pp. 11, 13, 76, 95.

8. Theodor Hopfner, *Über die Geheimlehren von Jamblichus*. (Leipzig: Theosophisches Verlagshaus, 1922), p. x. For evaluation, see Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson B. Hershbell, trs. and eds. *Iamblichus On the Mysteries* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p. xxviii.

9. *Iamblichus*, p. xxviii.

0. Ibid., p. xxx.

1. See her full discussion of pseudonyms, “Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen,” pp. 137–47.

2. *Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 34.

3. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.112.

4. Translation of Donald A. Russell in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2002).

5. Translation of J. C. Rolfe in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1914).

6. Thus Speyer (p. 38 n. 4), for example, notes the following: B. Capelle, “Un homiliaire de l’evêque arien Maximin,” *RBén* 34 (1922): 81–108, and “Les homélies ‘De lectionibus euangeliorum’ de Maximin l’arien,” *RBén* 40 (1928):

49–86: works of the Arian Maximus were transmitted as works of Maximus of Turin; and P. Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1964), pp. 293–302: a poem attributed to Paulinus of Nola was actually written by Paulinus of Pella.

7. Olympiodorus *Prolegomena;* CAG XII/1, 13, 4–5; Elias *In Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias Commentaria* (ed. A. Busse: Berlin, 1900), 128.1–22.

8. These and all translations of Eusebius are drawn from G. A. Williamson, *Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine;* rev. and ed. Andrew Louth (London: Penguin, 1965).

9. See V. Buchheit, "Rufinus von Aquileja als Fälscher des Adamantiosdialogs" in *ByzZ* 51 (1958): 314–28.

0. Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 40; the reference from Wilamowitz occurs in note 4: *Göttingenische gelehrte Anzeigen* 158 (1896), p. 634 n. 1.

1. Theodoret, *Haer, Fab. Comp*. 2.5; J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Ignatius, and Poly-carp*, part 1, *Clement*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1889), pp. 377–80.

2. Translation of C. B. Gulick in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1969).

3. Miroslav Marcovich. *Pseudo-Iustinus: Cohortatio ad Graecos, de Monarchia, Oratio ad Graecos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990).

4. Thus the so-called thirty-seventh letter of Jerome, containing a dialogue of Jerome and Augustine, came to be assigned to Jerome himself, even though the author clearly differentiates himself from Jerome. So too the Dialogue *Contra Felicianum Arianum* came to be attributed to the main speaker Augustine, even though it was probably by Vivilius of Thapsus (see Ficker, *Studien zu Vigilius von Thapsus* 1897, pp. 77–79). In a similar way, the Dialogue *Adversus Fulgentium Donatistam* was also assigned to Augustine (see C. Lambot, "L'écrit attribute à S. Augustin *Adversus Fulgentium Donatistam*" in *RBén* 58 [1948], 177–222, esp. 183–84). On all these, see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 32–33.

5. As expressed in various publications; see Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Collection and Origin of the Canonical Gospels* (London: SCM Press, 2000), pp. 34–56. Among refutations of Hengel's views, see, for example, F. Bovon, "The Synoptic Gospels and the Noncanonical Acts of the Apostles," *HTR* 81 (1988): 20–23.

6. Translation of Ernest Evans, *Tertullian, Adversus Marcionem: Books 4 and 5* (Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 271. All translations of this work will be from this edition.

7. Robert Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, eds., *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), p. 22.

8. "Elle nous aura permis d'établir—malgré la modestie de nos sources et en admettant que nos textes soient bien recevables—que le plagiat et la forgerie d'oeuvres littéraires pouvaient être considérés comme des délits et sanctionnés." Bernard Legras, "La sanction du plagiat littéraire en droit grec et hellénistique," in E. Cantarella et G. Thür, éds., *Symposion* 1999 (Pazo de Mariñan, 6–9 septembre 1999; Cologne-Weimar-Vienne, Böhlau, 2003), 459.

9. *Lives*. 5.92. Unless otherwise indicated, this and the following quotations are taken from the translation of R. D. Hicks in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1925).

0. Translation of Walter C. A. Ker, *LCL* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

1. Translation of Granger; see p. 14 n. 11.

2. *Histories*, 9.2.1; quotation from the translation of W. R. Paton from *Polybius: The Histories*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1922–1927).

3. Translation of H. Rackham, *Pliny: Natural History*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1938).

4. See p. 14.

5. I, 22. Translation of Charles Foster Smith, *Thucydides: History of the Peloponnesian War: Books I and II*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1919).

6. *Ad Verum Imp*. 2, 1, 14. Translation of C. R. Haines, *Marcus Aurelius Fronto*, LCL, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1919), p. 43.

7. Translation of H. M. Hubbell, *Cicero V*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

8. *Histories*, 2. 56.8–12; translation of W. R. Paton, *Polybius: The Histories*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1922).

9. Ibid., 12, 25a1–25b4.

0. *Apology* 5; Rudolph Arbesmann, *Tertullian*, FC, 10 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1950), pp. 20–21. Subsequent quotations of this work will be from this edition.

1. For introductions, texts, and translations, see Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 419–567.

2. "Diese Passage (in Tertullian) ist nicht zuletzt von Bedeutung, weil sie ein für alle mal die Legende von der problemlosen Akzeptanz von Pseudepigraphie in

einem christlichen Umfeld widerlegen sollte." "Erkannte Pseudepigraphie?" in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 195.

3. Translation of S. Thelwall, *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 677.

4. See Willy Rordorf, "Tertullien et les Actes de Paul (à propos de bapt 17, 5)," in *Lex Orandi Lex Credendi*, ed. Gerardo J. Békés e Giustino Farnedi (Rome: Editrice anselmiana 1980), pp. 475–84.

5. For a contrary opinion see Stevan L. Davies, "Women, Tertullian and the Acts of Paul," *Semeia* 38 (1986): 139–43, who argues that Tertullian is referring not to our extant Acts of Paul but to a lost pseudepigraphic letter of Paul. For an effective refutation, see Rordorf, "Tertullien et les Actes."

6. Oracles were important in Greek cities and were occasionally consulted, especially in times of crisis. The integrity of their text was, as a result, hugely important. It is not clear, however, why the sinking of the islands off Lemnos would have been such a politically charged issue. On the importance of Greek oracles, and thus of their integrity, see Hugh Bowden, "Oracles for Sale," in Peter Derow and Robert Parker, eds., *Herodotus and His World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 256–74. My thanks to Prof. Bowden for the reference and for his communications on this topic. See also Michael A. Flower, *The Seer in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

7. Attica, 1, 22. 7. Translation of Peter Levi, *Pausanias Guide to Greece*, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1971).

8. Oracles at Delphi 407B-G. Translation of Frank C. Babbitt *Plutarch: Moralia*, vol. 5. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936).

9. Translation of John Ferguson, trans., *Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis: Books One to Three* (FC 85; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), p. 119.

0. *Geography* 9.1.10. Translation of H. L. Jones in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1927).

1. See esp. Rudolf Pfeiffer, *The History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).

2. The most extensive catalogue of these accusations is in A. Bludau, *Die Schriftfälschungen der Häretiker: Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik der Bibel*. (Münster: Aschendorf, 1925). Bludau claims—wrongly in my view—that these charges were more commonly directed against heretics for misinterpreting, not falsifying, Scripture. This view is largely based on Bludau's somewhat odd notion that since there were so many debates over Scripture in the early centuries, copyists (heretical or otherwise) would have been reluctant to change the text. This is not a widely held view today; for an alternative, see my study

The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture.

3. *Adv. Marc*. 4.4; translation of Ernst, *Tertullian*, pp. 267, 275.

4. *De adult libr*. 7; translation of Thomas P. Scheck, *St. Pamphilus, Apology for Origen; with the Letter of Rufinus, On the Falsification of the Books of Origen* (FC 120; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p. 125.

5. Quoted in Rufinus, *De adult. libr*. 7; translation of Schenck, *St. Pamphilus*, p. 29.

6. *De adult libr*. 13; ibid., p. 135. See Mark Vessey, "The Forging of Orthodoxy in Latin Christian Literature: A Case Study," *JECS* 4 (1996): 495–513.

7. Preface of Rufinus; translation of G. W. Butterworth, *Origen on First Principles* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), p. lxiii.

8. Translation of W. H. Fremantle in *NPNF*, 2nd series, vol. 3.

9. *Adv. Ruf*. 2.11. Translation of *NPNF*.

0. For the formula "neither adding nor removing," see, among others, W. C. van Unnik, "De la règle ΜΗΤΕ ΠΡΟΣΘΕΙΝΑΙ ΜΗΤΕ ΑΦΕΛΕΙΝ dans l'histoire du canon," *VC* 3 (1949): 1–35. W. C. van Unnik, "'Die Formel nichts wegnehmen, nichts hinzufügen' bei Josephus," in idem, *Josephus als historischer Schriftsteller* (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1978), 26–49; C. Schäublin, "Μήτε προσθεῖναι μήτ᾽ ἀφελεῖν," *MH* 31 (1974): 144–49; L. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 27; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 37–46; M. Mülke, *Der Autor und sein Text: Die Verfälschung des Originals im Urteil antiker Untersuchungen* (Untersuchungen zur Antiken Literatur und Geschichte 93; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 20–27, 266–68. I am obliged to Zlatko Pleše for these references.

. Letter of Aristeas, 311. Translation of R. J. H. Shutt, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1985).

2. Translation of Zlatko Pleše, in Ehrman and Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 191.

CHAPTER FOUR

Forgery in Antiquity

Aspects of the Broader Phenomenon

Having looked at related phenomena from the Greco-Roman world, we can now redirect our focus to literary forgery itself, the practice of producing literary works with false authorial claims. The bulk of this study will consider the use of literary forgery and counterforgery in Christian polemical contexts of the first four centuries CE. To set the stage for that discussion, we need to look at the broader phenomenon in pagan, Jewish, and Christian antiquity, considering its extent and its widespread recognition and condemnation; the motives that drove authors to make their false claims; techniques they used to make these claims believable; the self-justifications that they made, or may have made, for engaging in the practice; and the means of detection used by ancient critics to expose forgery when they found it.

EXTENT OF THE PHENOMENON

It is impossible to quantify the extent of ancient forgery, although everyone who has worked seriously on the problem recognizes that it is a vast field.[1]

Pagan Literature

I will not attempt to provide here a comprehensive listing either of works

identified as forgeries in pagan antiquity or pagan works now known or thought to be forgeries—two overlapping but not coterminous corpora. Numerous instances will be addressed throughout this chapter and the next. Instead, to give an idea of the extent of the field here at the outset, I will summarize some of the incidental and direct comments about forgery in just one book of Diogenes Laertius' ten-volume work on the *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*.

In 2.39 Diogenes indicates that the (published) speech of Polycrates against Socrates is not authentic (μὴ εἶναι ἀληθῆ τὸν λόγον) since it mentions the rebuilding of the walls by Conon, which occurred ten years after Socrates' death. In 2.42 he indicates that the paean to Apollo and Artemis allegedly written by Socrates between the time of his condemnation and death (two lines of which Diogenes quotes) are debated: the critic Dionysodorus maintained that Socrates did not write it. So too Pisistratus of Ephesus denied that the works of Aeschines were actually written by him; the critic Persaeius attributed most of the seven books in question to Pasiphon, of the school of Eretria (2.61). With respect to Dialogues involving Socrates, we learn that Panaetius thought that those produced by Plato, Xenophon, Antisthenes, and Aeschines were authentic; but he doubted the authenticity of those ascribed to Phaedo and Euclides and he rejected all the others as inauthentic (2.64). The six books of essays attributed to Aristippus are said to have been accepted by some critics, whereas Sosicrates of Rhodes claimed that Aristippus had written none of them at all (2.84). As to the dialogues allegedly produced by Phaedo, Diogenes accepts as genuine (γνησίους) the "Zopyrus" and "Simon"; the "Nicias" is doubtful (δισταζόμενον), as is "The Elders"; the "Medius" is claimed "by some" critics to be the work of Aeschines or of Polyaenus; and some also attribute the "Cobblers' Tales" to Aeschines (2.105). Nine of the dialogues of Glaucon are thought to be authentic, but there are also extant thirty-two others that are considered spurious (οἳ νοθεύονται) (2.124). With respect to the "Medea" of Euripides, some claim that it is instead the work of Neophron of Sicyon (2.134).

All of this in just one volume of one ancient writing. In the same volume Diogenes also mentions two cases of plagiarism.[2] And Diogenes is not unique: as we have already seen, and will see yet more presently, there was a widespread practice of criticism among pagan literati of our period.

In Jewish Literature

The documented or suspected instances of forgery among Jewish writers of the time are not as extensive, in no small measure because there were far fewer

Jewish writings of any kind.[3] In an earlier period, the so-called writing prophets of the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve), if they wrote at all, wrote in their own names (e.g., Isaiah, Amos) or anonymously (2 Isaiah; 3 Isaiah; editorial editions to Amos and others, for example). Only two books of the Hebrew Bible can be considered forgeries in the sense that I am using it here. The visions of Daniel 7–12 claim to be written by the sage and prophet of the sixth century BCE but were almost certainly produced, in reality, four hundred years later by someone assuming the false name for reasons of his own. (I will be dealing with the question of apocalypses as pseudepigrapha shortly.) The book of Qoheleth is a textbook case of a non-pseudepigraphic forgery: its author clearly indicates that he is to be taken as Solomon (chs. 1–2), without naming himself, although he, once again, was writing many centuries after Solomon had passed from the scene.

Outside of the Hebrew Bible, orthonymous writings were, in the words of Annette Reed, “surprisingly rare among Second Temple Jews.”[4] She names as exceptions ben Sira, Aristobulus, Eupolemus, Artapanus, and later Philo and Josephus. The authenticity of other works, such as the writings of Hecataeus and Manetho, are today hotly contested.[5] Even so, there are well-known forgeries, including the Wisdom of Solomon[6]; the Letter of Aristeas[7]; the Letter of Demetrius of Phaleron to Ptolemy II within the letter of Aristeas; the Decree of Artaxerses in the additions to the book of Esther; 3 Ezra 6.7–22, 6.24–27, 6.27–34, 8.9–24; the letters from and to the rulers of Sparta in 1 Macc. 12.2, 5–23, 14.20–23 (cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 12.225–28; 13.165–70); the letters between Solomon and Vaphres quoted in Eusebius (*Prep. Evang*. 9.31–32); between Solomon and Suron King of Tyre and Sidon (*Prep. Evang*. 9.33–34), the Decree of Alexander the Great in Sulpicius (*Severus Chron*. 2.17.2); and the Letter forged in the name of Herod’s son Alexander mentioned by Josephus (*War* 1.26.3). Examples could be multiplied.[8]

A special question arises concerning the literary character of Jewish apocalypses, books certainly written in the name of someone other than the actual author. But is it appropriate in these cases to speak of “forgery,” when pseudepigraphic authorship functioned as a standard element of the generic expectation of the works? In response, an obverse question might well be posed: Is there any reason that an entire (or almost entire) genre could not comprise, by its very nature, forgeries?

There has been extensive scholarship devoted to the question of the authorship of the Jewish apocalypses. None was more initially influential but subsequently renounced as D. H. Russell’s work *The Method and Message of*

Jewish Apocalyptic 200 B.C.-A.D. 100.[9] Russell contended that the pseudonymous authorship of Jewish apocalypses could be explained on the grounds of (1) corporate personality, in which ancient Jewish authors did not clearly separate the individual from his or her larger social group; (2) contemporaneity, in which Jews at the time did not neatly differentiate between the past and present; and (3) extension of personality, in which Jewish authors, such as those of the apocalypses, identified so closely with earlier figures that they could legitimately claim to write in their names. Each of these three points, as well as Russell's overall theory, has been effectively discounted by subsequent scholarship devoted both to the specific field of apocalyptic literature[10] and to pseudepigraphy more broadly.[11]

Apart from Russell, however, there is a broad, though not universal, sense among scholars of Jewish apocalypticism that the use of pseudonymity was so widespread as a practice that it must have been seen as conventional by the authors who produced the work and, correspondingly, "seen through" by their readers, who were not at all convinced that the resultant books were actually written by Abraham, Enoch, Ezra, Baruch, and so on. This broad sense is open to dispute, however, and has indeed been called into question by recent investigations. For one thing, one wonders where there is any actual evidence that the pseudepigraphic claims of the apocalypses were transparent fictions. It is striking that the one reader from antiquity who explicitly comments on the matter, Tertullian, insisted that Enoch's pre-diluvian composition (our 1 Enoch) is not invalidated by the fact of the flood: his direct descendant, Noah himself, no doubt could have reproduced the book verbatim after all surviving copies were destroyed by the deluge (*De cultu Fem*. 1, 3, 1).

Apart from the question of ancient "reader response," one needs to take seriously the functions and intentions of the genre itself, and of its pseudepigraphic character in particular. John Collins has repeatedly stressed that the authorial claim of the apocalypses functions precisely to make the *ex eventu* prophecies believable. Readers who knew that Daniel was not really predicting the history of nations up to and following Antiochus Epiphanes would not have found much solace or assurance in his "prophecies." Only if his authorial claim is believed can his predictions about the imminent destruction of Antiochus have any effect. That is to say, since other prophecies (*ex eventu*, as we now know) came true, so too then, obviously, will the ones the reader is most interested in, namely those involving the current oppressor. Likewise for other apocalypses of Daniel's ilk, including those at Qumran.[12]

Karina Martin Hogan takes the matter a step further. While acknowledging

that earlier scholars tried to get the ancient pseudonymous authors of the apocalypses off the moral hook (Speyer: “echte religiöse Pseudepigraphie”; Russell “corporate personality”; and so on), Hogan chooses to stress the historical consciousness of Jewish apocalypticists. In her view, pseudonyms were carefully and consciously chosen by the apocalyptic authors because these particular names provided links between the key historical periods with which the apocalypses were concerned. In particular, Noah, Moses, Daniel, Baruch, and Ezra were assigned apocalyptic visions because as traditional figures they bridged distinct historical periods and watershed events: Flood, Exodus, Babylonian Exile, and Restoration. As Hogan concludes about the real authors: “by casting Israel’s history in the form of *ex eventu* prophecy, they bring a new perspective of determinism as well as an explicit claim to divine revelation, both of which set them apart from the biblical narratives and histories.”[13] Once again, in any event, the authorial claim was conscious, even calculated.

A different angle taken by Michael Stone leads to a similar result.[14] Stone argues that the authority of the Jewish apocalypses did not come merely from the transmundane revelation they narrated, but also from the fact that they were written precisely to be taken as Scripture and were based, for that reason, on “ancient normative tradition.” The claim to represent this tradition was secured by the name of the figure who conveyed the revelation. But that meant the name had to be explained and justified. This is what led to occasional self-conscious discussions of how the books were preserved from hoary antiquity to the present (cf. 1 Enoch 68.1; 81.1–5; 2 Enoch 10, 13, esp. 13.75–78; and so on): “That a need was felt to account for this is revealing. It betrays, by protesting overmuch, the awesome weight of the received scriptural tradition.” These authors, in short, “were conscious in large measure of what they were doing, yet did it in dialectic with the received tradition,” even if, as Rowland and others have insisted, “part of what they were doing was validated for them by their actual experiential practice.” As a result, pseudepigraphic claims were done “partly ingenuously and partly very consciously.”[15]

In light of these studies, there seems little reason to place pseudepigraphic apocalypses in a different category from pseudepigraphic prophecies, histories, epistles, and so on. For clear and distinct reasons, a writer claimed to be a figure from the distant past,[16] with the intent of convincing his readers that what he said about himself was true. Otherwise the apocalyptic visions would not “work” as visions.

With the testamentary literature we are dealing with a different phenomenon.[17] Even though the Testaments report the first-person narratives of

their respective characters (the Twelve Patriarchs, Moses, Solomon, etc.), they do not claim to be written by these people. Instead, they function like embedded speeches or faux documents in, say, ancient histories, which purport to record the actual words of a key figure but which are, in reality, invented by the orthonymous (or, in the case of the Testaments, anonymous) authors themselves.[18]

In Christian Literature

There is little reason to cite every instance that has come down to us of forgery among the Christians of the first four centuries, as I will be discussing prominent cases throughout the bulk of my study. It is worth observing, however, that criticism was very much alive and well among Christian thinkers of the first four centuries. A bewildering number of writings, including many of those that eventually became part of the New Testament, were claimed by one Christian critic or another not to have been written by their alleged authors. As some examples: Augustine's Manichaean opponent Faustus argued that the Gospels were not actually written by apostles or companions of the apostles (*Contra Faust*. 32.2). Unnamed "heretics" rejected 1 and 2 Timothy, according to Clement of Alexandria, presumably meaning that they did not agree that Paul wrote them (*Strom*. 2.11). Eusebius indicates that the authorship of James was "disputed" (meaning some rejected it), because "few of the ancients quote it" (*H.E*. 2.23.25; 3.25); so too Jerome indicates that some writers considered the book pseudonymous (*Vir. ill*. 2.2). 2 Peter was doubted (Origen in Eusebius, *H.E*. 6.25.11) or rejected (Jerome, *Vir. ill*. 1); Didymus the Blind explicitly claims it was forged.[19] Jude too was "disputed" (meaning some rejected it) according to Eusebius (*H.E*. 2.23.25) and rejected because it quotes Enoch, according to Jerome (*Vir. ill*. 4). "Not all" considered 2 John and 3 John "genuine" according to Origen (Eusebius, *H.E*. 6.25). Revelation, as we have seen, was thought by some to be homonymous (thus Dionysius of Alexandria; Eusebius, *H.E*. 7.25); others ascribed it to a specific forger, Cerinthus (Gaius according to Eusebius, *H.E*. 3.28). Eusebius appears to reject Clement as the author of 2 Clement (*H.E*. 3.38) and labels Barnabas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Shepherd as νόθα (*H.E*. 3.25). The Gospel of Peter was eventually declared pseudepigraphic by Serapion (*H.E*. 3.25). So too Jerome labeled the Acts of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Judgment of Peter nonauthentic (*Vir. ill*. 1). According to Eusebius, the Prophecies of Barcabbas and Barcoph were in fact invented by Basilides (*H.E*. 4.7.6–7). Paul's letters to the Laodiceans and the

Alexandrians were labeled Marcionite forgeries by the Muratorian fragment. We have seen that Epiphanius names a number of Phibionite forgeries in book 26 of his Panarion; elsewhere he rejects Gospels written in the names of James, Matthew, and other disciples as Ebionite productions (book 30). Slightly later Jerome rejects the treatise "On Fate," allegedly by Minucius Felix, and Augustine exposes the letter of Jesus allegedly written to Peter and Paul (Augustine, *De cons. Evang*. 1.10)

Early Christian authors similarly reject a long string of forged letters and documents: Athanasius was apparently the victim of an Arian letter forged in his name (*Apol. ad Const*. 19–21). There was also a forged summons to Augustine allegedly from Victorinus (Aug. *Epist*. 59, 2), a letter of Jerome suspected by Rufinus (*Adv. Rufin*. 3. 2), and another letter allegedly by Jerome about false translations of Scripture (*Adv. Rufin* 3.25; also 2.24). Jerome himself wonders if a letter of Augustine's is actually his (*Epist*. 102,1). Augustine doubts several books assigned to Pelagius (Aug. *De gest Pelag*. 1.19) and mentions a forgery in the name of Cyprian (*Epist*. 93.38). And a series of interpolations of false teachings amid the statements of Basil make it appear that he held these aberrant views (*Epist*. 129.1; 224.1).

And on and on. This list does not count all the books that scholars today widely accept as pseudepigraphic. Just in terms of the earliest Christian tradition, it is striking, as is often noted, that between Paul and Ignatius there is not a single Christian author who writes in his own name, with the possible exception of the "John" of the Apocalypse (which is homonymous).[20] Every other Gospel, epistle, treatise, or sermon is either forged or anonymous and then falsely attributed. No surprise, then, that K. M. Fischer can label the second half of the first century "the era of New Testament pseudepigraphy."[21]

From these sundry references it is also clear that ancients employed criticism during this early period. Jeremy Duff, in his otherwise helpful study "A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity," is incorrect to claim that there are only six explicit discussions of pseudepigraphy in the first two Christian centuries. He names, as the six, 2 Thess. 2:1–3 (a letter "as if by us"); Dionysius of Corinth, who complains about false teachers interpolating his own writings; Serapion on the Gospel of Peter; Tertullian on the Acts of Paul; Tertullian on the Gospels of Mark and Luke (as actually Gospels of Peter and Paul); and the Muratorian Fragment with its comments on heretical forgeries.[22] Some of these, however, do not concern issues of authorship. Dionysius of Corinth is referring to the falsification of (his own) writings, not to forgery. And Tertullian, as we have seen, condemns the author of the Acts of Paul and Thecla

not for forging the account but for fabricating it. Moreover, when Tertullian indicates that Mark and Luke are reasonably considered to represent the views of Peter and Paul (*Adv. Marc*. 4.5.3–4), he is not suggesting that Mark claimed to *be* Peter or that Luke claimed to *be* Paul. These authors (for Tertullian) wrote in their own names, not in the names of their authorizing figures.

On the other hand, there are other authors of the period who did indeed discuss pseudepigraphy, especially in Duff's wider usage of the term. Hegesippus, for example, maligned heretical forgeries in circulation, as Eusebius tells us: "And in discussing apocryphal books, as they are called, he states that some of them were fabricated by heretics in his own time" (καὶ περὶ τῶν λεγομένων δὲ ἀποκρύφωνδιαλαμβάνων, ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ χρόνων πρός τινων αἱρετικῶν ἀναπεπλάσθαι τινὰ τούτων ἱστορεῖ; *H.E*. 4, 22, 9). So too Gaius of Rome objected to those who "compose new scriptures" and contended that Paul's letters number thirteen, not accepting Hebrews as Pauline. As Eusebius indicates: "for then as now there were some at Rome who did not think that it was the Apostle's" (*H.E*. 6.20.3). Moreover, Gaius appears to have assigned the authorship of the book of Revelation to Cerinthus, who only falsely claimed to be John (Eusebius *H.E*. 3.28). So too, somewhat later, Dionysius of Alexandria indicates that his "predecessors" had charged that the book of Revelation was forged by Cerinthus in the name of John in order to get a hearing for his views (Eusebius, *H.E*. 7.25).

In addition, Irenaeus mentions numerous apocryphal and inauthentic writings by the heretics: "they adduce an untold multitude of apocryphal and spurious writings, which they have composed (πλῆθος ἀποκρύφων καὶ νόθων γραφῶν ἃς αὐτοὶ ἔπλασαν) to bewilder foolish men and such as do not understand the letters of the Truth" (*Adv. Haer*. 1.20.1).[23] Clement of Alexandria, as previously noted, mentions some who reject 1 and 2 Timothy because the former speaks of Gnosis falsely so-called (*Strom*. 2.11). Finally, as we have also seen, Origen was even more forthright than Dionysius of Corinth in complaining about the falsification of his own work.[24]

As a net result, there is certainly no lack of materials from antiquity related to forgery—pagan, Jewish, and Christian. All the odder, as I indicated at the outset, that there are so few studies devoted to the topic. There are to be sure explorations of individual cases in droves,[25] as well as extensive studies of the relationship between pseudepigraphy and canon.[26] And there are articles written on this or that aspect of the broader problem,[27] many of them compiled into valuable collections.[28] But where are the monographs?[29]

FALSE AUTHORIAL CLAIMS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

We have already seen substantial grounds for labeling literary works that make false authorial claims forgeries, for example in the clear instances of intended deceit considered in Chapter Two and in the ancient Greek and Latin terms used to describe the phenomenon, such as ψεῦδος, νόθος,, and κίβδηλος.. Scholars who object to the idea that deceit was involved in the practice typically claim that literary, or intellectual, property is a modern notion without an ancient analogue, so that authors who made false authorial claims were simply engaged in a widely accepted exercise that no one thought the worse of. And so, for example, in his commentary on the pseudepigraphic letter to the Ephesians, Andrew Lincoln declares:

> There is no reason to think of the device of pseudonymity in negative terms and to associate it necessarily with such notions as forgery and deception.… The idea of "Intellectual property," basic to modern discussion of legitimate claims to authorship, plagiarism, and copyright laws, played little or no role in ancient literary production.[30]

On these grounds, Lincoln indicates that literary pseudepigraphy (what I'm calling forgery) "was a widespread and accepted literary practice in both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures."[31] Lincoln is not alone in expressing such opinions.[32]

The careful studies of Speyer, Brox, Grafton, Duff, and Baum, among others, however, have effectively destroyed this position. Ancients certainly did have a sense of intellectual property, and, as we have seen, critics thought and spoke badly of anyone who transgressed acceptable bounds by falsely claiming in writing to be a well-known person.[33] On the contrary, what is a modern invention is the idea that ancient readers widely found false authorial claims acceptable.[34] This was recognized already by one of the pioneers of the modern study of forgery, Frederik Torm, some eighty years ago:

> The situation within Judaism and Christianity resembled that of the Greco-Roman world. *Either* one believed in the authenticity of a pseudonymous document and could then prize it highly, *or* one assumed its inauthenticity, in which case the writing in question became suspect already due to its pseudonymity. The notion that in this era pseudonymity was ever treated as a literary form in the religious realm

and was indeed recognized as such is a modern invention.…[35]

Chief among the reasons for thinking that ancients were interested in knowing who actually wrote a literary work is what we have already begun to see repeatedly: ancient critics themselves addressing the issue with striking frequency. Speyer cogently speaks of an "extensive body of [ancient] writings, which does not serve any other purpose but to separate out inauthentic works from the literary remains of famous authors by means of philological and historical methods."[36] The ancient evidence is overwhelming. Just to give a fuller sense of the matter, I might mention some isolated instances.

Herodotus provides the first documented instances of Echtheitskritik, already in the fifth century BCE, when, among other things, he questions whether Homer authored the Cypria and the Epigoni epic (2, 116ff. and 4, 32). Ion of Chios, in his *Triagmi*, indicates that Pythagoras ascribed some of his own poems to Orpheus[37]; so too, Aristotle doubted that the Orphic poems were by Orpheus.[38] Extensive comments on authenticity—determining which works were νόθα and which were γνήσια—appear in the Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle, from Ammonius and Simplicius to Elias and David.[39]

After the construction of the great libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum, Echtheitskritik became the task of the grammarians. Thus we learn, for example, from Quintilian:

> For not only is the art of writing combined with that of speaking, but correct reading also precedes illustration, and with all these is joined the exercise of judgment, which the old grammarians, indeed, used with such severity that they not only allowed themselves to distinguish certain verses with a particular mark of censure and to remove, as spurious, certain books which had been inscribed with false titles, from their sets, but even brought some authors within their canon and excluded others altogether from classification.[40]

And so, in the first half of the third century, Callimachus at the Alexandrian Museion categorized books in the library as genuine (γνήσια),, inauthentic (i.e., forged: νόθα), or debated (ἀμφίβολα, ἀμφιδοξούμενα, ἀμφιβαλλόμενα).[41]

More specifically, in the later first century BCE, Dionysius of Halicarnassus expressed doubts ("Lysias" ch. 12 and "Dinarchus" chs. 2–3) about speeches of Lysias that were widely thought genuine, as we will see more fully later. Aulus

Gellius indicates that Lucius Aelius maintained that only 25 of the 130 comedies circulating in the name of Plautus were authentic (*Noct. Attic*. 3.3.11–14). So too, numerous forgeries were in circulation in the name of Democritus: "Many fictions of this kind seem to have been attached to the name of Democritus by ignorant men, who sheltered themselves under his reputation and authority (nobilitatis auctoritatisque eius perfugio utentibus)" (10. 12.8).[42] Plutarch repeatedly speaks of his doubts concerning the genuineness of letters (*Brutus* 53, 7; *Lysand*. 14, 4). So too Pausanias on occasion, as when he expresses some mild doubt over the Hesiodic authorship of the *Theogony* (e.g., 9.27.2: "Hesiod, or the one who wrote the *Theogony* fathered on Hesiod"). Arguably the most famous critic of all was Galen, who took on the entire Hippocratic corpus, in part precisely to decide what was authentic and what not.[43] And we have already considered Diogenes Laertius and comments from the second book of his ten-volume work. Isolated other comments include his statement that the *Nautical Astronomy* attributed to Thales (εἰς αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένη) is said by others to be the work of Phocus of Samos (*Lives*, 1.23); that among the writings of Glaucon some thirty-two are to be considered spurious (οἳ νοθεύονται; 2.124); that the lecture notes of Strato "are doubted" (5.60); that some attribute Phlegon's play *Philosophers* to Poseidippus (7.27); and that a verse of Empedocles is perhaps to be assigned instead to Simonides (8.65). And on and on.

This listing of Greek and Roman sources intent on uncovering forgeries is not meant to be exhaustive. It is merely intended to illustrate a historical reality: ancient authors who mention pseudepigrapha do so because they are invested in knowing who really wrote the books produced in the name of known figures. Intellectuals were widely concerned to know whether a book's reputed author was its real author.

As we have already seen in part, there was an extensive discourse about authenticity in the early church as well, all of it implying a concern over what we might call literary property. To the discussions already cited, I might mention an expression of dismay over "heretical" forgeries from Ambrosiaster, who laments that just as the Devil sometimes assumes the guise of the redeemer in order to deceive believers, so too heretics write in the names of the sacred authors.[44] Ambrosiaster does not say here what he might think about forgers of his own theological persuasion; but there is no doubt what he thought of forgers with whom he disagreed. This naturally raises the broader question of the attitudes that ancient critics, especially Christians, had about the phenomenon of forgery.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT FORGERY

If there were no concept of intellectual property in antiquity, it would be virtually impossible to explain not only why plagiarists were condemned and sometimes punished, but also why authors complained about forgeries being produced in their own names. With his customary humor and bite, for example, Martial objects to forgers who produced poems, claiming to be him:

> My page has not wounded even those it justly hates, and fame won with another's blush is not dear to me! What does this avail me when certain folk would pass off as mine darts wet with the blood of Lycambes, and under my name a man vomits his viperous venom who owns he cannot bear the light of day? (*Epigrams*, 7.12)
>
> If some malignant fellow claim as mine poems that are steeped in black venom, do you lend me a patron's voice, and with all your strength and without stopping shout: "My Martial did not write that"? (7.72)[45]

The best-known instance of complaint comes from Galen, a century later. In one of his many autobiographical accounts, he indicates that when passing by a bookseller in the Sandalarium he overheard an argument between a man who had just purchased a book with the title "Galen the Physician" and a trained amateur scholar, who read two lines and proclaimed "This is not Galen's language—the title is false."[46] Galen's own reaction was to write *De libris propriis*, the book about his books. Here he was straightforward about his goals: to allow those without the requisite grammatical and rhetoric training to know which books were actually his. And he certainly had a lot to be concerned about. By one modern account, some 13 percent of the surviving Galenic texts are forgeries.[47]

Among other things, these instances from Martial and Galen immediately give the lie to those New Testament scholars who claim that forgeries in the name of Paul, or Peter, or any other apostle, necessarily come from after their lifetimes, since no one would have dared forge a writing in the name of a person still living. Interestingly, this claim is often made by more conservative biblical scholars, who, ironically enough, tend to hold to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians, a book in which "Paul" objects to a forgery circulating in his own name among the Thessalonians (2:2).

And "Paul" was not the only Christian who was both aware of and incensed by forgeries in his own name. We have already seen an analogous situation with

Origen from a century and a half later.[48] A century still farther on we have the account of Athanasius, irate over a letter forged in his name by a theological opponent:

> I am sure you will be astonished at the presumption of my enemies. Montanus, the officer of the Palace, came and brought me a letter, which purported to be an answer to one from me.… But here again I am astonished at those who have spoken falsehood in your ears, that they were not afraid, seeing that lying belongs to the Devil, and that liars are alien from Him who says, "I am the Truth." For I never wrote to you, nor will my accuser be able to find any such letter.[49]

Forged letters became a real and widespread problem in the highly charged polemical environment of the Christian community at the end of the fourth Christian century and into the fifth. And so we have the complaint of Jerome:

> My brother Eusebius writes to me that, when he was at a meeting of African bishops which had been called for certain ecclesiastical affairs, he found there a letter purporting to be written by me, in which I professed penitence and confessed that it was through the influence of the press in my youth that I had been led to turn the Scriptures into Latin from the Hebrew; in all of which there is not a word of truth.

That he was not the author of the letter should have been obvious from the style; in any event, Jerome considers himself fortunate, tongue in cheek, for not being "self-accused" by the forger of truly criminal activity.

> It was impossible for him, accomplished as he was, to copy any style and manner of writing, whatever their value may be; amidst all his tricks and his fraudulent assumption of another man's personality, it was evident who he was.… I wonder that in this letter he did not make me out as guilty of homicide, or adultery or sacrilege or parricide or any of the vile things which the silent working of the mind can revolve within itself. Indeed I ought to be grateful to him for having imputed to me no more than one act of error or false dealing out of the whole forest of possible crimes. (*Adv. Ruf*. 2.24)[50]

In another place Jerome himself is falsely accused by Rufinus of forging a letter in the name of Pope Anastasius, a letter that, as it turns out, was genuine (*Adv. Ruf*. 3, 20). Elsewhere Rufinus feels that he has been unjustly accused of forging a letter in Jerome's name to a group of African bishops (Jerome, *Adv. Ruf*. 3, 25). Again, Jerome writes Augustine to ask if the letter he has received is actually by him (*Epist*. 102.1). As we have already seen, Augustine too exposed a forgery of a letter allegedly by Victorinus summoning him to a council meeting.[51]

It should not be objected that the forging of letters is generically different from the forging of literary works. Generic differences do matter. But many of the early Christian forgeries we will be examining—including those found in the New Testament—are precisely letters.

REACTIONS TO VIOLATORS CAUGHT IN THE ACT

There was no legislation in Greece and Rome to protect literary property rights, just as there was no legislation for all sorts of scandalous and socially unacceptable activities. Still, to that extent, forgery in antiquity is different from today, when forgers can be punished by law. At the same time, there is no doubt, as we have seen, that by the early Christian centuries there had long been a sense of intellectual property among ancient authors. Another indication is that ancient falsifiers of texts, fabricators of accounts, and forgers of literary works were regularly condemned, chastised, and sometimes even physically punished for their troubles.

In our first surviving account of Echtheitskritik, Herodotus tells us that Onomacritus was not only caught in the act of falsifying oracles but was severely punished for it by being banished from Athens.[52] This was not merely the peculiar whim of the local despot. Onomacritus and others like him who altered the oracular texts were open to widespread aspersion, as attested still many centuries later by Plutarch: "I forbear to mention how much blame men like Onomacritus, Prodicus, and Cinaethon have brought upon themselves from the oracles by foisting upon them a tragic diction and a grandiloquence of which they have had no need, nor have I any kindly feeling toward their changes" (*Oracles at Delphi* 407B).[53]

In a similar vein, the Stoic Athenodorus was relieved of his duties in the great library of Pergamum because he altered the texts of Zeno.[54] In Christian circles, as we have seen, Tertullian tells us of the presbyter of Asia Minor who resigned (by force?) his ecclesiastical office on being implicated in the fabrication of the Acts of Paul and Thecla (*De baptismo*, 17). In other instances, falsifiers and

fabricators were simply maligned for their literary handiwork, as when Dionysius of Corinth leveled bitter complaints against those who heretically altered his writings,[55] or when Celsus castigated Christians for inventing Sibylline oracles that placed predictions of the coming of Christ on the lips of the ancient pagan prophetess.[56]

Much the same kinds of reaction are attested for those caught making false authorial claims. We have seen already the castigations of Martial on the pagan side and Origen on the Christian, leveled against brash authors who forged writings in their names.[57] Sometimes forgers were called to account, as when the fifth-century ecclesiastic Salvian was caught by his own bishop forging a writing in the name of Paul's companion Timothy. As we will see, Salvian wrote a self-serving justification in his own defense. For now it is enough to note that his bishop, Salonius, was not at all amused when he discovered that his former colleague and current underling had tried to promote his own views in the name of an authority who had been dead for four hundred years. That Salonius was upset and incensed is clear; how he reacted to Salvian's self-defense we will never know. We learn of the incident only from Salvian himself.[58]

In other instances we learn of real punishments for forgery. The philosopher Diotimus was caught having forged fifty obscene letters in the name of Epicurus. According to Athenaeus (*Banqueters* 13.611B), who names as his source Demetrius of Magnesia (the "Homonyms"), an Epicurean philosopher named Zeno tracked Diotimus down and murdered him. Forging could be serious business. This much we can learn from a Jewish source, Josephus, who indicates that a royal servant in the court of King Herod forged a letter in the name of Alexander that discussed his plan to murder his father Herod. The forger, a certain "Diophantus, a secretary of the king, an audacious fellow, who had the clever knack of imitating any handwriting [δεινὸς μιμήσασθαι πάσης χειρὸς γράμματα]; and who, after numerous forgeries, was eventually put to death for a crime of that nature."[59]

There are not many testimonials from antiquity about persons caught in the act of falsifying, fabricating, and forging documents. But every instance that we do have points in the same direction. These were not acceptable practices. On the contrary, they were condemned, maligned, castigated, and attacked. In the realm of polemical discourse and political realia, in particular, they were matters of real moment—sometimes, though rarely, of course, matters of life and death.

AUTHORS AS AUTHORITIES

We have seen that ancient attitudes toward the violation of intellectual property claims are relatively clear just from the vocabulary used to describe it. The terms used for plagiarism (“thievery,” “robbery”) and forgery (“lies,” “adulterations,” “bastards”), for example, were obviously harsh. Moreover, we have observed a keen interest in and serious intellectual energy devoted to establishing writings as authentic or spurious. Those who were found guilty of literary malfeasance were objects of derogation, if not worse.

In the rarified realm of literary criticism, deprecating comments were often simply off the cuff, as when Seneca the Elder, speaking of the works of the great rhetoricians, says, “In general there are no extant drafts from the pens of the greatest declaimers, or what is worse, there are forged ones (quod peius est, falsi).”[60] Still, critics wanted to know who said what, and they cast aspersions on the anonymous authors who claimed to be someone else. Thus, for example, Porphyry, in his *Life of Plotinus*, speaks of a book allegedly written by Zostrianus: “I myself have shown on many counts that the Zoroastrian volume is spurious and modern, concocted by the sectaries in order to pretend that the doctrines they had embraced were those of the ancient sage.”[61]

For Seneca, Porphyry, and other ancient critics, one of the key reasons for wanting to know whether or not a writing was genuine (γνήσιον) was a widely shared cultural assumption that a symbiotic relationship existed between the author of a writing and its authority. That is to say, critics were not concerned about either the author or the contents of a writing in isolation from one another, but in tandem. The person of the author provided the authority for the account; at the same time, the contents of the account established the identity of the author. This symbiotic relationship was fully appreciated by early Christian critics and is a key to understanding their attitudes toward forged writings.

To some extent, the early Christian intellectuals, like their non-Christian counterparts, were interested on general grounds in knowing who the authors of various texts really were. And so, for example, Clement of Alexandria, one of the earliest of the trained Christian critics, both borrowed and mirrored the critical stances of his pagan contemporaries:

> It is said that the oracles attributed to Musaeus were composed by Onomacritus, Orpheus’ *Mixing-Bowl* by Zopyrus of Heraclea, the *Descent to Hades* by Prodicus of Samos. Ion of Chios in his *Triads* records that Pythagoras attributed some of his work to Orpheus. Epigenes in his work *On Poetry Attributed to Orpheus* says that the *Descent to Hades* and the *Sacred Doctrine* are works of the Pythagorean

> Cercops and the *Robe* and the *Works of Nature*, writings of Brontinus.[62]

So too Tertullian, from the passage already mentioned: perplexed by the existence of the book of Enoch, Tertullian develops a lengthy argument to show that even if all the copies of the book had been destroyed by the flood in Noah's day, Noah himself, as Enoch's descendant, would have remembered his teachings handed down through the family line and so would have been able to reconstruct them, either of his own natural abilities or through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In either case, the book of Enoch extant today really is the book written by the antediluvian Enoch (*De cultu Fem*. 1.3.1).

Or there is Augustine dealing with the books of the Hippocratic corpus:

> But even in worldly writings there were well-known authors under whose names many works were produced later, and they were repudiated either because they did not agree with the writings that were certainly theirs or because, at the time when those authors wrote, these writings did not merit to be recognized and to be handed on and commended to posterity by them or their friends. Not to mention others, were not certain books that were produced under the name Hippocrates, the highly renowned physician, rejected as authoritative by physicians? Nor did a certain similarity of topics and language offer them any help. For, compared to the books that it was clear were really Hippocrates' books, they were judged inferior, and they were not known at the same time at which the rest of his writings were recognized as truly his.[63]

This widespread desire to find the actual, not just the reputed, author of a text puts a question mark beside the recent claim of Armin Baum that ancient critics did not consider a work forged so long as the contents could be thought to go back to the alleged author, whether or not he actually produced the book. In Baum's view, it did not matter so much whether the alleged author actually wrote the words; what mattered is whether the contents of the work could be traced back to the views of the alleged author. If so, ancient critics did not consider the book to be forged.[64]

Baum's detailed and learned study is useful in many ways, but this overarching thesis is problematic for a number of reasons.[65] It is true that the content of a book mattered to critics, and that it was one of the chief criteria used to establish claims of authorship. But there were other grounds as well, as we

have already begun to see; moreover, these other grounds were employed precisely because ancient critics were genuinely interested in the historical question of who actually put pen to papyrus.

Before pursuing this particular issue further, it might be worthwhile pointing out a broader problem with Baum's line of argumentation, the inconvenient fact that numerous authors and groups of readers, holding wildly disparate philosophical or religious views, could claim that the contents of a particular text really were, or were not, those of the alleged author. In most instances there was no way then, and scarcely any way now, of adjudicating these claims. This will be an enormous issue once we come to the Christian materials in the following chapters. Various followers of Paul took contrary lines on such fundamental issues as the unity of the godhead, the nature of Christ, the viability of marriage and sexual relations, and so on. Some among these followers produced writings in Paul's name, all claiming that Paul himself authorized their views. The reality is that he authorized none of them. Baum's view may be theologically satisfying: apostolic pseudepigrapha can be accepted as apostolic, even if apostles did not write them, and no charge of forgery need be leveled against their pseudonymous authors. But the view is very hard to establish historically, given the nature of our evidence and our ability to trace multiple lines of thought back to apostles (e.g., that women can be active in the worship of the church or that they have to be passive and submissive instead—both views are "Pauline").

That is to say, pseudonymous texts supporting divergent views, on Baum's assessment, would theoretically all have to be seen, historically, as nonproblematic in their authorial claims. But the ancients did not see it that way. If a book did not support the "correct" interpretation of Paul, then it could not be by Paul. And then it was labeled a lie, a deceit, and a bastard. The correct interpretation, however, was generally established not on historical-critical but on theological grounds. If a text agreed with the interpreter's own understanding of Paul, then it could be accepted as genuinely Pauline; if not, then it was forged.

Moreover, as I have begun to emphasize, in many instances in antiquity, critics both Christian and non-Christian were interested in the simple historical question of whether the alleged author of a work was its real author. This decision was not based purely on the question of the contents of a work, but on other grounds as well. Take the famous words of Origen on the authorship of Hebrews:

> If I were asked my personal opinion, I would say that the matter is the Apostle's but the phraseology and construction are those of someone

> who remembered the Apostle's teaching and wrote his own interpretation of what his master had said. So if any church regards this epistle as Paul's, it should be commended for so doing, for the primitive Church had every justification for handing it down as his. Who wrote the epistle is known to God alone: the accounts that have reached us suggest that it was either Clement, who became Bishop of Rome, or Luke, who wrote the gospel and the Acts. (Quoted in Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.25.11–14)

Origen's attitude may seem to justify Baum's view that only the contents mattered in establishing "genuine" authorship. But in fact it does not. Even though Origen agrees that the contents of the letter to the Hebrews are Pauline, he refuses to call it Pauline (even though he understands why others would want to do so). In other words, he refuses to do precisely what Baum's view suggests he should have done: accept the Pauline authorship of the book because of the Pauline contents. For Origen—at least in his one explicit discussion of the matter—the contents are not enough. He will not say a book is by Paul unless Paul actually wrote it.[66]

So too Origen's contemporary Dionysius of Alexandria, who was heavily invested in knowing who actually wrote the book Revelation. On the basis of a *stylistic* analysis, he shows that it could not have been John, the apostle and author of the Fourth Gospel and the book we now call 1 John. He concludes that it was instead produced by a holy and inspired man of the same name writing at the same time (Eusebius, *H.E.* 7.25.7).

Eusebius too was interested in knowing the actual authors of the early Christian writings. As one of his leading criteria he, the inveterate historian, looked to see how widely a book was used and attested by earlier authors. Writings that appear to have been unknown in earlier times were suspect, not just with respect to their canonicity but more specifically with respect to their authorship, two issues that were closely tied together (but by no means synonymous) in Eusebius' mind. Usage, though, was as important as content.

And so, for example, he has this to say about the epistles of James and Jude:

> Such is the story of James, to whom is attributed the first of the "general" epistles. Admittedly its authenticity is doubted, since few early writers refer to it (ἰστέον δὲ ὡς νοθεύεται μέν, οὐ πολλοὶ γοῦν τῶν παλαιῶν αὐτῆς ἐμνημόνευσαν), any more than to "Jude's," which is also one of the seven called general. (*H.E.*

2.23.25)

At stake here is not merely whether these books should be included in the canon, but also the fundamental issue that makes the canonical decision possible: Are these books genuinely by the ascribed authors? Or are they νόθα? On balance, Eusebius thinks the former. He engages in much the same line of argument with respect to the writings ascribed to Peter (*H.E.* 3.3.1–4). 1 Peter is genuine, because it is quoted widely; 2 Peter is not to be seen as canonical, even though some Christian leaders find it valuable. Other books such as the Acts of Peter, the Gospel of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, and the Apocalypse of Peter are to be rejected because they were not used in earlier times or in orthodox circles, to Eusebius' knowledge (*H.E.* 3.3.2). Again it may appear that Eusebius is concerned here only with issues of canon, but in fact the question of canon for him is closely tied to the more precise question of authenticity: a book not actually written by Peter and not widely accepted as being written by Peter is not to be included among the canonical writings of Peter. This is clear from the conclusion of his discussion: "These then are the works attributed to Peter, of which I have recognized only one epistle as authentic and accepted by the early fathers" (ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ὀνομαζόμενα Πέτρου, ὧν μόνην μίαν γνησίαν ἔγνων ἐπιστολὴν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς πάλαι πρεσβυτέροις ὡμολογημένην, τοσαῦτα. Note: γνησίαν [3.3.4]). That the issue for Eusebius was not merely canonicity but also authorship in se is seen by the circumstance that he applies the same kinds of criteria—especially lineage of usage (not contents)—in discussing works that he clearly did not consider canonical, such as 2 Clement (*H.E.* 3.38.4). If the book does not have an established lineage of usage from Clement's day, it is not to be attributed to Clement, independently of the question (Baum's) of whether the contents are Clementine.

Much the same could be said about Jerome, who determines that the letter to Jude is to be included among the Catholic epistles, but points out that it is rejected by other Christian critics because it quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch (and surely no inspired author would quote as authoritative an apocryphal book!) (*Vir. ill.* 4). Here, as in Eusebius, the authority of the book resides in the actual author. In this instance the authenticity of the book is determined on the basis of its contents. This is not a case that supports Baum's perspective, however; for here the contents render a negative judgment (what is found in the book indicates that Jude could not have written it), not a positive one (the book is rightly attributed to Jude because the contents—apart from the wording and style—*do* go back to him). Moreover, Jerome, like Eusebius, is interested in the

matter of authorship itself, that is, in who actually produced a book that goes under the name of a well-known person (and not simply on the grounds of contents).[67] Thus, for example, he argues that the work *De fato* ascribed to Minucius Felix is not actually by him, not because of its contents but because of its writing style: "although the work of a very learned man, [it] does not seem to me to correspond in style with the work mentioned above" (*Vir. ill*. 58). So too Theophilus, the sixth bishop of Antioch, composed many surviving genuine accounts, but the two books "On the Gospel" and "On the Proverbs of Solomon" are not authentic, because they "do not appear to me to correspond in style and language with the elegance and expressiveness of the above works" (*Vir. ill*. 25).[68]

And so there are two points that need to be stressed with respect to Christian approaches to forgery. On one hand, contrary to Baum, it was not simply the contents of a work that mattered; Christian critics were invested in knowing who actually wrote a work, on the basis of content, style, and established patterns of usage. On the other hand, this question of authorship did stand in a clear but ironically symbiotic relationship with the contents of a work. It was the contents that, in part (but only in part), helped determine whether an author actually wrote the book circulating under his name; but it was precisely the fact that he wrote the book that provided the authority for its contents.

Nowhere can this paradoxical situation be seen more clearly than in the famous incident of Serapion and the Gospel of Peter. Eusebius later narrates the event, from his first-hand knowledge of Serapion's autobiographical account, which is only partially quoted for us in the *Ecclesiastical History* (*H.E*. 6.12). Upon visiting the Christian community in the village of Rhossus, Serapion initially approved of their use of the Gospel of Peter, reasoning that if Peter had written a Gospel, it was obviously acceptable for liturgical use. Only after returning to Antioch did Serapion learn that the book had heretical tendencies. Procuring a copy for himself, he came to see that whereas most of it was perfectly acceptable, parts were definitely susceptible of a docetic reading. It was precisely on these grounds that he forbade the further use of the book and appears to have referred to it as the "so-called" Gospel of Peter (τοῦ λεγομένου κατὰ Πέτρον εὐαγγελίου).

Here then is our symbiosis between literary author and authoritative literature: the Gospel would be authoritative had it been written by Peter; but the possibly heretical contents show that it could not have been written by Peter. And so the book is not authoritative. Eusebius himself adopts a similar line of thought, as when he attacks heretical forgeries in the names of the apostles Peter,

Thomas, and Matthias, which “do not have the apostolic character” (ὁ τῆς φράσεως παρὰ τὸ ἦθος τὸ ἀποστολικὸν ἐναλλάττει χαρακτήρ; *H.E.* 3.25.6–7) “while the ideas and implication of their contents are so irreconcilable with true orthodoxy that they stand revealed as the forgeries of heretics.” Both the style and contents are non-apostolic, and so they lack apostolic authority.

This understanding of the symbiotic relationship between authorial claims and authoritative contents did not originate with Eusebius, or with Serapion before him. It goes all the way back in the proto-orthodox heresiological tradition. Irenaeus, for example, attacks heretics for forging books in the names of others to lead their followers astray: “Besides those passages, they adduce an untold multitude of apocryphal and spurious writings [inenarrabilem multitudinem apocryphorum et perperum scripturarum, quas ipsi finxerunt], which they have composed to bewilder foolish men and such as do not understand the letters of the Truth” (*Adv. Haer*. 1.20.1).[69]

So too Tertullian: the fourfold Gospel of the orthodox is superior to the forgeries of Marcion—the heretic’s creations are later in date than the apostolic writings and so must be seen as corruptions of an older truth (*Adv. Marc*. 4.5). And his contemporary, the author of the Muratorian Fragment, who rejects the letters to the Alexandrians and to the Laodiceans on the basis of their contents: they contain Marcionite teachings, were therefore not originally written by Paul, and so cannot be accepted as authoritative.[70]

The same view can be seen at the end of our period of concern, or just after, for example in the works of Augustine. Augustine uses a strictly historical argument in order to show that the theurgic letter allegedly written by Jesus to his disciples Peter and Paul could not be authentic: Paul was not one of Jesus’ earthly followers. The forger of the letter must have been misled by seeing a Christian painting of the two apostles with Jesus and assumed then that the three were companions during Jesus’ earthly life. Since they were not, Jesus would not have written to the two of them:

> How, then, is it possible that Christ could have written those books which they wish to have it believed that He did write before His death, and which were addressed to Peter and Paul, as those among His disciples who had been most intimate with Him, seeing that up to that date Paul had not yet become a disciple of His at all? (*De cons. evang*. 1.10)[71]

As a result, the letter and the magical practices it supports were forged. In

consequence, they have no authority. The authority of the writing resides in its authorship; and authorship is decided, at least in part, by the writing's contents. It is a two-way street.

As I pointed out earlier, however, this two-way street presented a problem to the early Christian critics, since it was a path accessible to just about anyone. No one saw that more clearly than Augustine himself, who protested against his Manichaean opponent Faustus: "Sinfulness has made you so deaf to the testimonies of the scriptures that you dare to say that whatever is brought forth from them against you was not said by the apostle but was written by some interpolator or other under his name" (*Contra Faust*. 33.6). Since authority resided in authorship, the easiest way to deny authority was to reject authorship. It is precisely this conundrum that made the literary and historical critical endeavors of the early Christian critics so vitally important. These faithful intelligentsia were not simply engaged in antiquarian endeavors when deciding which works were justifiably attributed to their alleged authors. This was theological discourse of the highest order, since authority resided in authorship. And so the contents of a work mattered insofar as they were genuinely penned by an authoritative figure. If the authorial claims were false, however, the text lost all claim to authority. Establishing the credibility of authorial claims was, as a result, central to the entire theological enterprise. It really did matter who wrote what.

1. None more so than Wolfgang Speyer and Norbert Brox, but including such recent scholars as Margaret Janssen and Armin Baum. See note 27 below.

2. Xenophon appears to have published a book of Thucydides claiming it was his own (depending on how one reads the text; 2.57), and Aeschines, a follower of Socrates, published work he had received from Socrates' wife Xanthippe as if it were his own (2.60).

3. For a relatively succinct summary and discussion, see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 150–68.

4. Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of 'The Bible' in Late Antiquity," in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lorenzo DiTommaso and Lucian Turcescu (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 478.

5. See Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, "The Reliability of Josephus Flavius: The Case of Hecataeus' and Manetho's Accounts of Jews and Judaism: Fifteen Years of Contemporary Research (1974–1990)," *JSJ* 24 (1993): 215–34. For the famous but disputed letter of Judah Maccabee in 2 Maccabees, see Ben Zion Wacholder, "The Letter from Judah Maccabee to Aristobulus: Is 2 Maccabees

1:10b-2:18 Authentic?” *HUCA* 49 (1978): 89–133.

6. This is another case of non-pseudepigraphic forgery: the author does not say that his name is Solomon, but he claims to be a Jewish king who built a temple, and he describes events from Solomon’s lifetime. The Muratorian fragment famously assigns the book to Solomon’s friends—without denying that it implicitly claims instead to be by Solomon himself—but accepts it as canonical. Its authorship was doubted throughout the early church, for example by Origen in his *Commentary on John* 8, 37 (20.4.26); Jerome, *In libros Salom*. Praef; and Augustine (*Doctr. Christ*. 2, 8): “For two books, one called Wisdom and the other Ecclesiasticus, are ascribed to Solomon from a certain resemblance of style, but the most likely opinion is that they were written by Jesus the son of Sirach.”

7. Among the extensive works of scholarship, see especially the full study of Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003).

8. See especially Martin Hengel, “Anonimität, Pseudepigraphie und Literarische Fälschung in der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Literatur,” in *Pseudepigrapha I*, ed. Kurt von Fritz (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1972), pp. 231–308; Morton Smith, “Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Tradition,” also in *Pseudepigrapha I*, ed. von Fritz, pp. 189–215; and Eibert Tigchelaar, “Forms of Pseudepigraphy in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 85–101.

9. London: SCM, 1964.

0. Thus Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), who argues, among other things, that “a distinctively Jewish interpretation of pseudonymity is difficult to uphold,” p. 66.

1. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, pp. 5–7.

2. See, for example, John Collins, “Pseudepigraphy and Group Formation in Second Temple Judaism,” in Esther G. Chazon and Michael Stone, eds., *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 43–58.

3. “Pseudepigraphy and the Periodization of History in Jewish Apocalypses,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 61–83; quotation p. 82.

4. “Pseudepigraphy Reconsidered,” *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 9 (2006): 1–15.

5. Ibid., pp. 12–13.

6. Except for such works as Revelation and the Shepherd, which were not forged.

7. See J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 773–995.

8. As Anthea Portier-Young has pointed out to me, there is a possible exception with the Testament of Moses, in which Moses instructs Joshua to write down his words and deposit them in earthenware jars for safekeeping. Presumably the Testament itself is to be a replication of these words. See *TMoses*, 1.14–18.

9. “In epistolam S. Petri Secundam Enn.,” *PG* 39 1774A.

0. 1 Clement may be seen as exceptional as well, in that it claims to be written by a group in Rome, and may well have been, by at least someone there. But since no authorial name is attached, it is perhaps best seen as anonymous.

1. “Die Zeit der neutestamentlichen Pseudepigraphie.” “Anmerkungen zur Pseudepigraphie im Neuen Testament,” *NTS* 23 (1967): 76.

2. Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, 1998, pp. 213–37.

3. *Against Heresies—Book I*, trans. John J. Dillon (ACW; New York: Newman Press, 1992).

4. See p. 64.

5. As will be abundantly clear in the chapters that follow.

6. Thus, e.g., Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon;* Terry L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, The New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004); and most helpfully Baum, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung*.

7. See the bibliography. I would include under this rubric, as some of the most useful contributions: J. S. Candlish, “On the Moral Character of Pseudonymous Books,” *Expositor* 4 (1891): 91–107; 262–79; Alfred Gudeman, “Literary Frauds Among the Greeks,” in *Classical Studies in Honor of Henry Drisler* (New York: Macmillan, 1894), pp. 52–74; idem, “Literary Frauds Among the Romans,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 25 (1894): 140–64; Arnold Meyer, “Religiöse Pseudepigraphie als ethisch-psychologisches Problem,” *ZNW* 35 (1936): 262–79; earlier in *Archiv für die gesamte Psychologie* 86 (1932): 171–90; Frederik Torm, “Die Psychologie der Pseudonymität im Hinblick auf die Literatur des Urchristentums,” *Studien der Luther Akademie*, Heft 2 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1932), pp. 7–55; Gustav Bardy, “Faux et fraudes littéraires dans l’antiquité chrétienne,” *RHE* 32 (1936): 5–23; 275–302; Kurt Aland, “The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian Literature of the First Two Centuries,” *JTS* 12 (1961): 39–49; Wolfgang Speyer, “Religiöse Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im Altertum,” *JAC* 8/9 (1965–66):

88–125; H. R. Balz, “Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie im Urchristentum,” *ZTK* 66 (1969): 403–36; Martin Hengel, “Anonimität, Pseudepigraphie und ‘Literarische Fälschung’ in der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Literatur,” in *Pseudepigrapha I*, ed. Kurt von Fritz (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1971), pp. 231–308; Morton Smith, “Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Tradition,” *in Pseudepigrapha I*, ed. Kurt von Fritz, pp. 189–215; Bruce M. Metzger, “Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 3–24; M. Rist, “Pseudepigraphy and the Early Christians,” in *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of A. P. Wikgren*; *Novum Testamentum Supplement*, ed. David Edward Aune (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), pp. 75–91; Franz Laub, “Falsche Verfasserangaben in neutestamentlichen Schriften: Aspekte der gegenwärtigen Diskussion um die neutestamentliche Pseudepigraphie,” *TTZ* 89 (1980): 228–41; Pokorny, P. “Das theologische Problem der neutestamentlichen Pseudepigraphie,” *EvT* 44 (1984): 486–96; E. J. Bickerman, “Faux littéraires dans l’antiquité classique en marge d’un livre récent,” in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986); Jean-Daniel Kaestli, “Memoire et pseudepigraphie dans le christianisme,” *RTP* 125 (1993): 41–63; Pier Franco Beatrice, “Forgery, Propaganda and Power in Christian Antiquity,” *JAC.E* 33 (2002): 39–51; Michael E. Stone, “Pseudepigraphy Reconsidered,” *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 9 (2006): 1–15; Martina Janssen, “Antike (Selbst) Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 125–79. See, in fact, all the essays, many of them lengthy, in the last-named volume.

8. E.g., Norbert Brox, ed., *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdisch-christlichen Antike* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977); and especially Martina Janssen, ed., *Unter falschem Namen: Eine kritische Forschungsbilanz frühchristlicher Pseudepigraphie* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003). See also Herzer, Janssen and Rothschild, eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*.

9. E.g., on much broader issues: Archer Taylor and Fredric John Mosher, *The Bibliographical History of Anonyma and Pseudonyma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); and Edmund Kerchever Chambers, *The History and Motives of Literary Forgeries*, Burt Franklin Research & Source Works Series 508 (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1891; Repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1970). Those dealing with pagan and early Christian materials in particular, in addition to Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung:* Josef A. Sint, *Pseudonymität im Altertum: Ihre Formen und ihre Gründe* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 1960);

Norbert Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben: zur Erklärung der frühchristlichen Pseudepigraphie* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, 79; Stuttgart: KBW, 1975); and Jeremy N. Duff, "A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, 1998).

0. *Ephesians*. WBC, 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), p. lxxi.

1. Ibid., p. lxx.

2. See further the discussion on pp. 128–32 below. A harsh opponent of these views, Armin Baum *(Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung*, p. 22) cites as examples of denying an ancient notion of literary property: F. Schmidt ("to some extent") in "'Traqué comme un loup.' A propos du débat actuel sur l'apocalyptique juive," *ASSR* 27 (1982): pp. 9–11; M. Casey, *Is John's Gospel True?* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 140–77, esp. p. 143, for the Jewish world; K.–H. Ohlig, *Die Theologische Begründung des neutestamentlichen Kanons in der alten Kirche*. KBANT (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1972) p. 91, for the early Christians.

3. Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 112–28; Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben*, pp. 62–80; Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, pp. 3–35; Duff, "Reconsideration," pp. 99–137; Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 21–24 and passim.

4. As a side note: if intellectual property had been unknown, plagiarism would not have been an issue. As we have seen, it was a very serious issue indeed among ancient authors.

5. Es verhielt sich innerhalb des Judentums und des Christentums wie in der griechisch-römischen Welt. Entweder glaubte man an die Echtheit einer pseudonymen Schrift und konnte sie dann sehr hochschätzen, oder man nahm die Unechtheit an, und dann war die betreffende Schrift schon wegen ihrer Pseudonymität jedenfalls etwas anrüchig. Daß man in jener Zeit jemals auf religiösem Gebiet die Pseudonymität als eine literarische Form aufgefasst und ihre Berechtigung geradezu anerkannt hat, ist eine moderne Erfindung.… Torm, "Die Psychologie," reprinted in Brox, *Pseudepigraphie in … Antike*, p. 119. Emphasis his.

6. "… ein umfangreicheres Schrifttum … das keinen anderen Zweck verfolgte, als nach philologisch-historischer Methode die unechten Werke aus dem Nachlaß berühmter Schriftsteller auszusondern." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 113.

7. According to Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8, 8.

8. Thus Johannes Philoponus, *Commentary on Aristotle's 'De Anima'* 1, 5.

9. See Carl Werner Müller, "Die neuplatonischen Aristoteleskommentatoren über die Ursachen der Pseudepigraphie," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, NF 112 (1969): 120–26; reprinted in Brox, *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und*

jüdisch-christlichen Antike, pp. 264–71.

). Inst. Or. 1, 4, 3. Translation of John Selby Watson at http://honeyl.public.iastate.edu/quintilian/.

.. Thus Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 23, referencing Blum, *Kallimachos und die Literaturverzeichnung bei den Griechen* (Frankfurt: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1977), 27–244; Y. L. Too, *The Idea of Ancient Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 115–50, esp. 126–34; and R. M. Grant, *Heresy and Criticism: The Search for Authenticity in Early Christian Literature* (Louisville: Westminster, 1993), pp. 15–32. On the work of the Alexandrians' editing practices, see Franco Montanari, "Zenodotus, Aristarchus and the Ekdosis of Homer," in *Editing Texts*, ed. Glenn W. Most (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 1–21.

!. Translation of J. C. Rolfe in the 1927 LCL edition.

;. See L. O. Bröcker, "Die Methoden Galens in der literarischen Kritik," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 40 (1885): 415–38. This is a learned classic, a careful exposition of the ways Galen engages in "criticism" in all its respects: lower criticism (textual); middle criticism (the detection of interpolations in authentic texts); negative higher criticism (establishing nonauthentic works, which Galen calls νόθα); and positive higher criticism (establishing authenticity of disputed works; Galen calls the authentic works γνήσια).

l. *Ad Thess. Sec*. 2, 4, 1 (CSEL 81, 3, 239).

;. Translation of Walter C. A. Ker, *Martial: Epigrams* LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1968).

;. Translation of P. N. Singer, *Galen: Selected Works* (Oxford: University Press, 1997), p. 3.

'. See Ronald F. Kotrc and K. R. Walters, "A Bibliography of the Galenic Corpus," *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* Series 5. 1 (1979): 256–304.

;. See p. 64.

). *Apol. Ad Const*. 19; translation of Archibald Robinson in *NPNF*, second series, vol. 4.

). Translation of W. H. Fremantle in *NPNF*, 2nd series, vol. 3.

.. Augustine, *Epist* 59, 1, 2.

!. See p. 61.

;. Translation of Frank Cole Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927).

l. See p. 62.

5. See p. 63.
6. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 7.56. See pp. 508–19.
7. See pp. 81 and 64.
8. See pp. 94–96.
9. *Jewish War*, 1. 26. 3; translation of Thackeray as taken from Henry Leeming, *Josephus' Jewish War and Its Slavonic Version: A Synoptic Comparison of the English Translation by H. St. J. Thackeray with the Critical Edition by N.A. Meščerskij of the Slavonic Version in the Vilna Manuscript Translated into English by H. Leeming and L. Osinkina* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).
0. *Controv*. 1 Praef 11; Translation of Winterbottom from LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).
1. Translation of Stephen MacKenna, *Plotinus: The Enneads*, http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/plotenn/enn001.htm.
2. *Strom*. 1.21. Translation of Ferguson, *Clement*, 119–20.
3. *Contra Faust*. 33.6; trans. by Roland Teske, *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean* (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, I/10) (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2007). All subsequent quotations of the work will be from this translation.
4. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, passim.
5. One of the chief witnesses he appeals to for this view is Porphyry, in an obscure but oft-mentioned passage that discusses the writings of Pythagoras. As I will show in Chapter 5, however, Baum completely misconstrues Porphyry's comments.
6. Elsewhere, Origen does indicate that Paul wrote Hebrews (*To Africanus*, 9; and possibly *De Principiis* 3.1.10, etc., although this is only in Rufinus' Latin, not the Greek; see also, though, *On Prayer*, 17; *Commentary on John* 2.6; 10.11). The easiest solution to these discrepancies is simply to suppose that he changed his mind on the question. It should be noted that elsewhere Origen shows an interest in knowing who actual authors were. With respect to the Petrine epistles, for example, he says that Peter "left us one acknowledged epistle, possibly two—though this is doubtful." With respect to the writings of John he says, "In addition, he left an epistle of very few lines, and possibly two more, though their authenticity is denied by some" (ἐπεὶ οὐ πάντες φασὶν γνησίους εἶναι ταύτας) (Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.25.8, 10).
7. See Vessey, "Forging," p. 507, n. 30.
8. Translations of Thomas Halton, *Saint Jerome: On Illustrious Men* (FC 100; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 84, 48. All

subsequent translations of this work will be taken from this edition.

). Translation Dominic J. Unger and John J. Dillon, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies*, Vol. I (ACW 55; New York, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 76.

). I do not find persuasive the attempt of A. Sundberg and M. Hahneman to redate the Muratorian Fragment from the late second to the fourth century (see A. C. Sundberg, “Canon Muratori: A Fourth Century List,” *HTR* 66 [1973]: 1–41; and Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1992). For incisive critiques, see Henne, “La datation du Canon de Muratori,” *RB* 100 (1993): 54–75; C. E. Hill, “The Debate over the Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon,” *WTJ* 57 (1995): 437–52; J.–D. Kaestli, “La place du Fragment de Muratori dans l’histoire du canon. À propos de la these de Sundberg et Hahneman,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 15 (1994): 609–34; and especially Joseph Verheyden, “The Canon Muratori: A Matter of Dispute,” in J.–M. Auwers and H. J. De Jonge, eds., *The Biblical Canon* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), pp. 487–556.

.. Translation of S. D. F. Salmond in *NPNF*, series 1, vol. 6.

CHAPTER FIVE

Forgery in Antiquity

Motives, Techniques, Intentions, Justifications, and Criteria of Detection

The discussion of the previous chapter leads to an obvious question: If literary forgery was extensively condemned in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, why was it, at the same time, so widely practiced? This question takes us directly to the matter of motivation: What drove so many authors to make false authorial claims? Wolfgang Speyer in particular has recognized motivation as a fundamental aspect of the broader phenomenon: "Failing to develop the intentions of forgers would be equivalent to failing to understand their forgeries. Motive alone explains the forgery."[1]

We are in the fortunate position of having vestiges of an ancient discourse on motivation. It is true that only rarely (and never in our period) do ancient forgers themselves explain why they did what they did.[2] And rarely (again, never in our period) is there systematic reflection on the matter by critics; only later writers attempted taxonomies of motivation. These are still worth examining. But from our period itself (prior to the fifth century CE) we do have numerous discussions of individual instances and clear ascriptions of motive by those who claim to have uncovered the deceitful practices of others. These discussions do not give unqualified indications of what individual forgers were actually thinking when they produced their work: a critic ascribing motivation to another is a different kind of "evidence" from forgers explaining their own motivations.[3] At the same

time, the ancient discussions do give us a clear sense of what motivations were conceivable, sensible, and plausible in the ancient context. Before creating a kind of taxonomy of our own, we might consider the one instance, from a slightly later period, in which a forger attempted to justify his actions once they were detected.

A LATER DISCUSSION OF MOTIVATION

The author was a Christian presbyter of Marseille named Salvian, who around 440 CE published the book *Timothei ad Ecclesiam Libri IV*.[4] The name "Timothy," of course, had clear apostolic connections from Pauline times. In his letter to the church, "Timothy" inveighed against a community that had grown rich and soft, while advocating radical almsgiving to the church (in the divestment of property). In his concern for total commitment to the gospel and an ascetic style of life, Salvian was not far removed from the concerns of another author, from about the same time, a pseudonymous "Titus" (the other of Paul's Pastoral companions) who wrote a scathing attack on Christians who indulged in the joys of the flesh, condemning anyone, married or not, who engaged in sexual activities. The author of the forged letter of Titus was never discovered. But the author of the forged letter of Timothy was, by none other than his own bishop, Salonius of Geneva.

Long before the incident, Salonius and Salvian had been members of the monastic community at Lerins, where, for a time, Salvian was Salonius' teacher. But eventually the student surpassed the instructor in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and when the letter of "Timothy" came to his attention, he immediately, for reasons never given, suspected that in fact it had been written by his former teacher and colleague. He evidently confronted Salvian on the matter, and Salvian wrote a letter in self-defense.

In this, his ninth letter, Salvian does not directly admit to having written *Timothei ad Ecclesiam*. But there is really no doubt about the matter, as he explains why the pseudonymous author (of whom he speaks in the third person) did what he did. That is to say, he explains his motivations.

On one hand, Salvian insists, the name of an author should not matter to a reader: "In the case of every book we ought to be more concerned about the intrinsic value of its contents than about the name of its author."[5] So too, "Since the name [of the author] is immaterial, there is no use in asking about the author's name so long as the reader profits from the book itself." These pleas ring hollow, however, in light of the rest of Salvian's self-defense: If he really

thought that an author’s name did not matter, why would he write pseudonymously? Why not write in his own name? Or even better, if names do not matter, why not write the book anonymously? The question is exacerbated by the fact that Salvian otherwise wrote extensively in his own name. His *De gubernatione dei* still survives, and other works were known in Christian antiquity.[6]

Still, Salvian’s answer is straightforward. He recognizes his own insignificance and knows that readers do in fact think it matters who produced a writing. He therefore “wisely selected a pseudonym for his book for the obvious reason that he did not wish the obscurity of his own person to detract from the influence of his otherwise valuable book.” If the authority of a book is rooted in the prestige of an author, then obviously a pseudonym is necessary: “For this reason the present writer chose to conceal his identity in every respect for fear that his true name would perhaps detract from the influence of his book, which really contains much that is exceedingly valuable.”

Given this confession of motivation, what Salvian claims next may seem a bit surprising, if not downright duplicitous. Why did he choose the name Timothy in particular? Readers naturally took the name to refer to Paul’s Pastoral companion, hence Salonius’ distraught reaction. But in clear tension with his earlier assertion that an unknown person would not be accepted as an authoritative source, Salvian claims that he chose the name purely for its symbolic associations. Just as the evangelist Luke wrote to “Theophilus” because he wrote “for the love of God,” so too the author of this treatise wrote as “Timothy,” that is, “for the honor of God.” In other words, he chose the pseudonym as a pen name.

Even though many critics today continue simply to take Salvian’s word for it,[7] the explanation does not satisfy. If Salvian meant what he said, that the reason for choosing a pseudonymous name was to authorize the account—since a treatise written by an obscure or unknown person has no authority—then how can he also say that the specific pseudonymous name was not that of an authority figure (Paul’s companion Timothy) but of an unknown, obscure, and anonymous person intent on honoring God?

Scholars determined to follow Salvian’s lead in getting him off Salonius’ hook have pursued various angles. Norbert Brox thinks it significant that Salvian claims in the letter to be humble (“we are urged to avoid every pretense of earthly vainglory.… The writer … is humble in his own sight, self-effacing, thinking only of his own utter insignificance”); for Brox, the choice of the pseudonym was consistent with ascetic practices of self-abnegation that Salvian,

in part, endorsed in the treatise of “Timothy.”[8] Brox notes that on two other occasions in his writings Salvian quotes himself, both times anonymously. He chose, in other words, to keep himself, and so his name, out of the limelight.

There is some merit to this view, but it does not really solve the problem.[9] Quoting oneself in the third person is not the same thing as writing in the name of someone else: if keeping out of the public eye was the key, then, as I have pointed out, Salvian could have written *Ad Ecclesiam* anonymously. Moreover, the other examples of the literary self-abnegation that Brox cites—starting with Paul’s discussion of his ecstatic removal to the third heaven in 2 Corinthians—involve instances in which an author actually uses his own name (i.e., 2 Corinthians is orthonymous). Brox does not, that is, adduce anything analogous to Salvian’s letter. What is completely analogous is the slew of forged writings from the early Christian tradition, numerous texts put in circulation by authors claiming to be apostles and companions of apostles, including letters allegedly written both to and by Timothy and Titus, canonical and noncanonical. Moreover, it should be reemphasized that Salvian did write other books using his own name.

Even less convincing is the more recent claim of David Lambert that Salvian’s ninth letter was actually written as a preface to *Ad Ecclesiam*.[10] It is true that in the scant manuscript tradition it is located there; but one can easily imagine why a scribe might arrange Salvian’s writings in that order, so as to explain the true nature of the authorship of the tractate. It can hardly make sense for Salvian to have put it there initially: the letter is a response to objections raised subsequent to the publication of the tractate, a self-defense for having circulated it under the name of someone else.

We do not know how Salonius reacted to Salvian’s defensive ninth letter. But it is relatively clear how he reacted to the tractate *Ad Ecclesiam* itself. He considered it a forgery, he objected to the literary practice, and he called the author to account for it. Moreover, it is difficult to take Salvian at his word that he never meant anyone to think that he really was Timothy, the companion of Paul. Otherwise his explanation that no one would heed an unknown or obscure author makes no sense: Who is more unknown or obscure than a person who does not exist, or one whose name is not even given? But his explanation for why he could not write the book orthonymously is of considerable value: it shows that one of the motivations for producing pseudepigraphic works was to get a hearing for one’s views, by claiming to be someone who deserved to be heard. That will be a fundamental point for the rest of our study.

Before stressing its importance for the polemical forgeries of early

Christianity, we would do well to consider the range of motivations for forgery attested in our ancient sources.

TAXONOMY OF MOTIVATIONS

It will be useful at the outset to differentiate between the concepts of motivation and intention. An intention indicates what a person plans to accomplish; a motivation indicates why she or he wants to accomplish it. A novelist may intend to write a best-selling book (that is what he would like to accomplish, his intention); but he may be motivated by a range of factors, including, for example, the desire to make a vast fortune and to become a household name. Later I will be furthering my argument that forgers in antiquity intended to deceive their reader into thinking they were someone other than who they really were.[11] But what drove them to do so? That is the question of motivation. I should stress that just as texts could perform a range of functions—rarely does an author write for just one reason—so too a forgery could be motivated by a number of reasons. The categories presented here, in other words, are not meant to be mutually exclusive.

To Make a Profit

It is sometimes, wrongly, claimed that the only reason for producing a forgery is to turn a profit. The New Testament scholar J. C. Fenton, for example, in an attempt to exculpate the authors of canonical pseudepigrapha from charges of deceit, argues that "A forger is one who writes in the name of another for his own profit: they [NT authors] did not do so. Forgery involves deceit for gain: pseudonymity did not."[12] Not only is this playing fast and loose with terminology (by fiat, a forger is out for personal profit), it overlooks an entire host of reasons that forgers had for doing what they did.

Still, it is true that on occasion—though not within the early Christian tradition—forgers were driven by a profit motive. The best-known evidence comes from Galen, who indicates that the construction of, and competition between, the libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum spawned an active forgery market, driven by the need of the respective librarians to boast holdings in Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, along with Plato, Hippocrates, Aristotle, and others.[13] As he puts the matter in one place: "For before the kings in both Alexandria and Pergamum eagerly endeavored to purchase ancient works, no one as yet produced pseudonymous writings

(οὐδέπω ψευδῶς ἐπεγέγραπτο σύγγραμμα).” Once money could be made for such texts, however, all that changed: many pseudepigrapha were then written (πολλὰ ψευδῶς ἐπιγράφοντες).[14]

Galen is wrong about the first part, since there were ample numbers of forgeries before the construction of the Hellenistic libraries. But the idea that plays and treatises in the names of the masters started to appear with alarming frequency once someone was willing to pay for them is completely plausible. Galen elsewhere gives a specific, related instance: one enterprising fellow took Hippocrates’ *Nature of Man* and Polybius’ *Regimen of Health*, both small-size volumes, and combined them in order to fetch a better price at one of the libraries.[15]

The evidence for this motive is not limited to Galen. In one of his humorous satires, *The Mistaken Critic*, Lucian charges:

> There is nothing invidious in fending off destitution by every means.… However you will permit me to praise one thing, anyhow, that very pretty performance of yours when you yourself—and you know it—composed the “Tisias’ Handbook,” that work of an ill-omened crow, thus robbing that stupid old man of thirty gold pieces; for because of Tisias’ name he paid seven hundred and fifty drachmas for the book, gulled into it by you.[16]

After our period, Olympiodorus claims that since Juba, king of Libya, so loved Pythagorean writings, Ptolemy Philadelphius Aristotelian writings, and Pisistratus tyrant of Athens Homeric writings, they were willing to pay gold for them. As a result, many entrepreneurial types forged such works and sold them on demand.[17] John Philoponus confirms the report about both Juba and Ptolemy.[18] Furthermore, in one of the classic studies of forgery, A. Gudeman speculates that the hundreds of pseudonymous speeches and orations from antiquity are best accounted for by thinking that booksellers cobbled together as many school exercises on different orators as possible in order to have an exhaustive collection for sale, and so outdo their competition.[19]

For Political and Religious Authorization

More commonly, forgeries were produced for political and religious reasons (these are not always distinct, of course), to authorize or attack, under authority,

political or religious figures and institutions. A number of instances are attested of forgers producing prophecies or oracular pronouncements for matters of state, such as when, at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Galba, a two-hundred-year-old set of verses was "discovered" in the temple of Jupiter Clunia indicating that a ruler would come from Spain.[20] The verses may have been presented as an oracular pronouncement of Jupiter himself. If so, this is forgery with aplomb: the alleged author is not claiming to be a famous human authority but the king of the gods. In any event, there was a long tradition of such oracular forgeries; Alexander the Great was one beneficiary, as in the course of his conquests he was presented with a forged oracle on a copper plate near the city of Xanthus in Lycia, which indicated that the time would come when the Persian Empire should be destroyed by the Greeks.[21]

So too the supporters of Julius Caesar could find cold comfort in an oracle "discovered" in Capua, in the grave of its founder Capys, which predicted the murder of a "son of Ilium" by his own relatives, after which things would go badly in Italy. Speyer suspects that Octavian and Antony themselves were responsible for the forged oracle, as it provided them with divine sanction to ostracize the murderers. Suetonius, who reports the event, swears to its truthfulness: "And let no one think this tale a myth or a lie, for it is vouched for by Cornelius Balbus, an intimate friend of Caesar."[22] Somewhat later, Suetonius reports, Augustus was the victim rather than the culprit of a forgery. But in this case he had the last word, as he punished a certain Patavinus for having "circulated a most scathing letter about him (Augustus) under the name of the young Agrippa."[23] The forging of political letters was a salient issue in the earlier struggles for power at the end of the Republic, as Asconius informs us in no uncertain terms in his commentary on Cicero's *In toga candida*, faulting, once again, Antony, but this time Catilina as well (*In toga candida*, 94). Other forgeries involving political intrigues are reported by Josephus, including one I have already mentioned, a letter forged in the name of Herod's son Alexander that spoke of his plan to murder his father.[24]

At other times forgeries were used to authorize the establishment of religious institutions, such as the oracle at Abonoteichus established by Alexander, Lucian's infamous "False Prophet." To demonstrate the divine approval of the new oracle, according to Lucian, Alexander and a cohort forged a set of bronze tablets and buried them in the temple of Apollo in Chalcedon. When dug up, these divine writings indicated that Asclepius and his father Apollo were soon to move to Pontus and take up residence at Abonoteichus. Here is one instance in which a forgery was spectacularly successful (*Alexander the False Prophet*, 10).

As Apologia

A closely related motivation, especially in Jewish and Christian circles, involves forgeries that functioned apologetically. Among Jewish instances, none is better known than the Letter of Aristeas, defending the divine origin of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.[25] Also worth noting are the surviving Sibylline oracles.[26] The twelve books, numbered, somewhat confusingly, 1–9 and 11–14, have been heavily Christianized; but only book 6 (and possibly the fragmentary book 7) is completely Christian. All the others are Jewish in whole or part. We will be returning to a fuller discussion of the Sibyllines in a later chapter; here it is enough to note their apologetic function. The original Jewish oracles present an ancient, divinely inspired, pagan prophetess who discusses, sometimes cryptically, the institutions, practices, and views of Judaism. What better authority to shore up a religious tradition under periodic attack by its (non-Jewish) cultured despisers? When Christians took over the texts, they served a doubly apologetic purpose: a pagan prophetess favorable to Judaism and antagonistic to Rome predicts the incarnation of the Son of God. Now it is the Christian faith that is attested as divine by an inspired and unimpeachable source, pagan in origin and Jewish by inclination.[27]

Whether Jewish apologists made extensive use of the Sibyllina is difficult to say; but there is no ambiguity about the delight that Christians took in them, as they are explicitly mentioned as early as Justin and cited as early as Athenagoras.[28] They caused no little controversy by the end of the second century, as the pagan opponent of all things Christian, Celsus, accused Christians of inventing the prophecies themselves. Origen, in his inimitable style, challenged his long-dead opponent to prove it: "[Celsus asserts] that we have interpolated many blasphemous things in her verses, though he does not give any instance of our interpolation. He would have proved this point had he showed that the older copies were purer and had not the verses which he supposes to have been interpolated."[29]

Some Jewish apologetic forgeries served clear political purposes, including the letter mentioned by Josephus between Arius, King of Sparta (died 265 BCE), to the Jewish high priest Onias III, a letter that showed the Jews to be blood relatives of the Spartans—obviously of some apologetic moment for Jews in the Hellenistic world.[30] The letter is cited as well in 1 Macc. 12.7–9. In other instances the apologia functioned more to justify Jewish religious practices (if, again, we can differentiate on any level between politics and religion). This is the case with the lesser-known Letter of Mordechai (adopted father of Esther) to

Alexander the Great, a Jewish apologia for the worship of the one God instead of idols and for maintaining high ethical standards, including the refusal to assert power and to engage in sexual immorality. The letter, originally in Greek, occurs at the beginning of some manuscripts of the Alexander Romance, but dates from early imperial times.[31]

Christians too employed epistolary forgeries for apologetic ends. This continues to be the most plausible explanation for the correspondence of Paul and Seneca.[32] Christians of the late fourth century were perplexed by the fact that the great apostle of the early church, whose powerful and persuasive writings formed the basis not only of the New Testament but also of the church's entire theology, was completely unknown to other great thinkers of the day. The forged attempt to show that Paul was revered by none other than Seneca is widely seen today as rather feeble. Little of substance is said in the letters, and Seneca reproves the apostle for his rather pedestrian writing style. In Christian antiquity, on the other hand, the letters were a real boon, and were accepted as authentic—and as irrefragable evidence of the apostle's greatness—almost immediately. They are paraded to apologetic effect already by Jerome (*Vir. ill*. 12) and Augustine (*Epist*. 153, 14).

One could well argue for a similar apologetic function lying behind the forged correspondence of Jesus and Abgar, cited by Eusebius and forming, then, the basis for the *Doctrina Addai*.[33] As we will see later, the letters serve an anti-Judaic purpose; but in no small measure they also elevate Jesus' importance. Far from being an obscure preacher from rural nowhere, he is recognized by one of the great kings of the region and his help is solicited in a time of need.[34] Royal acclamation comes to Jesus in yet other, nonepistolary, forgeries, including above all the Acts of Pilate and the other works of the Pilate cycle.[35] Here, rather than being guilty of crimes against the state, Jesus is portrayed as innocent, royal, and even divine—confessed to be divine, in fact, by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, by King Herod, and by the Roman Emperor Tiberius himself. I will have more to say about the Pilate cycle in a later chapter.[36]

Defamation of Character

Polemics can be seen as the flip side of apologetics, attack rather than defense. Not surprisingly, assaults on others—for political, philosophical, or personal reasons—are among the most widely attested motivations for the production of forgeries in antiquity.

We have already seen instances of political attacks in Cicero's complaints as

amplified by Asconius (*In toga candida*, 94); in the court of Augustus, as recorded by Suetonius (*Life of Augustus*, 51, 55); and in the household of Herod described by Josephus (*War* 1, 26, 3).

Philosophical attacks facilitated by forgery were at least as common, or even more so, judging at least from our surviving sources. One of the better-known instances is related by Pausanias in his story of Anaximenes, a rhetorician who, like all good rhetoricians, was skilled in imitating the style of others. Out of a personal vendetta against his fellow rhetorician Theopompus, Anaximenes wrote and widely circulated a treatise in his opponent's name, following closely his style; the treatise abused the citizens of Athens, Sparta, and Thebes. As Pausanias tells us, "Though Anaximenes was the author of the treatise, hatred of Theopompus grew throughout the length of Greece" (*Description of Greece*, 6.18.5).[37]

A comparable account is found in Diogenes Laertius, who indicates that Diotimus, a philosophical opponent of Epicurus, circulated fifty obscene letters in his name (*Lives* 10.3). This did nothing, as one might imagine, for Epicurus' reputation as a hedonist. Evidence that the story is not simply apocryphal is provided by Athenaeus, who indicates, as we have seen, that one of Epicurus' incensed followers, Zeno, tracked Diotimus down and murdered him for his spiteful act (*Banqueters* 13.611 B).

Other writings of Epicurus that were commonly accepted as authentic in antiquity spoke harshly of representatives of other philosophical schools. As Diogenes indicates:

> Epicurus used to call this Nausiphanes jelly-fish, an illiterate, a fraud, and a trollop; Plato's school he called "the toads of Dionysius," their master himself the "golden" Plato, and Aristotle a profligate.… Protagoras a pack carrier, the scribe of Democritus, and village school master; Heraclitus a muddler.… The Cynics foes of Greece; the Dialecticians despoilers; and Pyrrho an ignorant boor.[38]

Cicero says something similar.[39] W. Crönert, however, convincingly argues that these alleged writings of Epicurus in fact all derive from a single letter written by a single author, forged, again, in order to cast aspersions on Epicurus' reputation.[40] The letter is not one of those produced by Diotimus, since those, unlike this one, were obscene. In any event, slandering Epicurus through forgery appears to have been de rigueur.

Politicians and philosophers were not the only ones subject to forged assault, as we saw at the outset of the study in the case of the "Parthenopaeus" forged in the name of Sophocles by Dionysius the Renegade, in part to make his former teacher Heraclides look foolish. On several occasions Martial complains about poems forged in his name to sully his reputation.

> My page has not wounded even those it justly hates, and fame won from another's blush is not dear to me! What does this avail me when certain folk would pass off as mine darts wet with the blood of Lycambes, and under my name a man vomits his viperous venom who owns he cannot bear the light of day? (*Epigrams* 7.12)[41]
>
> The scurrilities of home-born slaves, low railing, and the foul insults of a hawker's tongue … [these] a certain skulking poet scatters abroad and would have them appear as mine. Do you believe this Priscus? That a parrot speaks with the voice of a quail.… Why should I toil to be known so evilly when stillness can cost me nothing? (*Epigrams* 10.3)[42]

With other public figures, the attacks were more direct, as comes out in the trial of Apuleius:

> And then there was that fabricated letter that was neither written by my hand nor plausibly forged. They intended it to show that I worked upon the woman by means of blandishments. But why use blandishments if I had put my trust in magic? Anyway, how did this letter come into their hands, for, naturally, it would have been sent to Pudentilla by way of a trusted person, as happens in such cases. And moreover, why would I write in such defective words, such barbarous language? … Yes, this is how things are, it is plain for everyone: the man who was not able to read a letter by Pudentilla in perfect Greek had less trouble in reading this one and put it across better, since it was his own. (*Apol*. 87)[43]

So too in Philostratus' defense of the rectitude of Apollonius in the face of published opposition: "And they have forged a certain letter (καὶ τινα ἐπιστολὴν ἀνέπλασαν) in the Ionic dialect, of tedious prolixity, in which they pretend that Apollonius went down on his knees to Domitian and besought him to release him of his bonds."[44]

Analogous instances occur in Christian sources, as when Augustine avers that

the enemies of Christ have attempted to slur the Savior's reputation by associating him with magical practices, in a letter forged in his name addressed to Peter and Paul (*Cons. Evang*. 1.10). Jerome, as we have seen, on one occasion had to defend himself against slurs leveled against him in a forged correspondence: "he found there a letter purporting to be written by me … in all of which there is not a word of truth.[45]

The use of forgery in polemical contexts, in any event, was widespread, as seen clearly by Horst Balz: "Forgeries were considered literary means of war and were answered with counter-forgeries."[46] Further examples of this phenomenon from within the Christian literary tradition will occupy us for the bulk of this study.

To Supplement the Tradition

Some forgeries appear to have been produced in order to fill in a lacuna known to exist in a tradition. As an example, Plato indicates in the Phaedo (60 D) that while awaiting his death in prison, Socrates composed some "lyrics," based on Aesop's fables and the Prelude to Apollo. Later some such verses were in circulation, as attested by Diogenes Laertius, who indicates that some people claimed that Socrates composed a final paean to Apollo and Artemis between his condemnation and death, two lines of which are quoted: "All hail, Apollo, Delos' lord! Hail Artemis, ye noble pair!" The authenticity of the lines, however, were called into doubt, as noted by Diogenes himself: "But Dionysodorus denies that he wrote the paean."[47]

The Christian tradition attests numerous forgeries intended to fill gaps in the dominical and apostolic traditions. In no small measure this accounts for the stories of Jesus' infancy in wide circulation, later to be written down in such works as the (redactionally) pseudepigraphic Infancy Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, and for the narratives of his activities between his death and resurrection, as in the Gospel of Nicodemus. From the apostolic side the most famous instance is "Paul's" extant letter to the Laodiceans, to which we will devote considerable attention later. If nothing else, the letter was occasioned in part by the mention of some such correspondence in the canonical, but also probably forged, letter to the Colossians (4:16). If a letter "from Laodicea" was said to have once existed, it is no surprise that someone—or more than one person, as we will see—invented a version of it. The surviving text may well have been meant also to provide an alternative to the Marcionite forgery already in circulation, much as somewhat later, the Christian Acts of Pilate, detailing

episodes from Jesus' trial and death, were meant to replace the earlier, and extremely popular, but forged, pagan Acts of Pilate, which probably explained in narrative detail how Jesus fully deserved his fate.[48]

Philosophical Schools?

Judging from discussions of ancient practices of pseudepigraphy in New Testament scholarship, one might think that one of the most commonly attested contexts in antiquity for writing under an assumed name was in the philosophical schools, where, allegedly, students commonly wrote treatises of their own but signed them in the name of their teacher as an act of humility, since, after all, the thoughts of the student were simply those given him by one who was greater. In point of fact, this is one of the least attested motivations for pseudepigrapha in antiquity, and there are solid reasons for questioning whether it was ever a motivation at all. As this judgment stands at odds with what Neutestamentlers have been taught and have themselves taught for decades, it will be necessary to devote a considerable amount of attention to the issue and to the ancient evidence that lies at the heart of it.

Pseudepigraphy in the Philosophical Schools: The Widespread Scholarly View

The common view of New Testament scholars has been recently expressed in an otherwise helpful article on "Pseudonymity and the New Testament Canon" by Harry Gamble, who maintains that there were occasions in antiquity where "pseudonymous authorship appears to have been conventional and innocuous," giving as his key example the "followers of Pythagoras" who "composed philosophic and scientific works under his name, ascribing to him all that they knew."[49] So too, Margaret MacDonald, in her commentary on Colossians and Ephesians, can state: "Viewing Colossians (or Ephesians) as deutero-Pauline should not be mistakenly understood as meaning that these documents are simply examples of forgery. For example, to write in the name of a philosopher who was one's patron could be seen as a sign of honor bestowed upon that person."[50] So too in another standard commentary on Colossians, Markus Barth and Helmut Blank claim that: "Pseudonymous documents, especially letters with philosophical content, were set in circulation because disciples of a great man intended to express, by imitation, their adoration of their revered master and to secure or to promote his influence upon a later generation under changed

circumstances."[51] And in a study of Ephesians Michael Gese maintains:

> Students to a greater or lesser extent put the thoughts of their teachers into writing, whereas great heads of schools frequently taught only orally. The authorial ascription therefore named the intellectual author to whom in the last instance the content of the work could be traced. People in antiquity did not perceive such an ascription as forgery.[52]

I cite these studies not because they are striking in their novelty, but because they express the *opinio communis*.[53]

This view, however, is not only expressed in commentaries on New Testament pseudepigrapha. It is a major contention among scholars of forgery as well, as a look at the recent study of Armin Baum and the older work of Norbert Brox makes particularly clear.[54]

One might ask what ancient evidence New Testament scholars provide in support of their assertions about the pseudepigraphic practices of the philosophical schools. In most cases—for example, in the vast majority of biblical commentaries—the answer is completely unambiguous: as a rule, they cite no evidence for the practice at all. The existence of the practice is simply asserted, stated as a fact, as if it must be so because so many scholars have assumed it is so. It is striking that those few (e.g., Baum) who do appeal to ancient evidence never cite any sources from the time of the New Testament or of the second century. In no small measure this is because no such evidence exists.

The sources that are sometimes discussed—at some length by Baum—come from later times. The two that have figured most prominently in the discussion are the Neoplatonists Porphyry and Iamblichus, who speak of the literary output of the school of Pythagoras, who lived eight hundred years earlier. As it turns out, however, one of these two sources, Porphyry, does not say what scholars have claimed he says, and the other, Iamblichus, is highly problematic for reconstructing what actually happened in the Pythagorean school. Neither source mentions anything about "common practices" of any of the other philosophical schools, let alone of philosophical schools in general, and neither says a word about practices of pseudepigraphy in the time period of our concern, the early Christian centuries.

OTHER ANCIENT SOURCES

Before turning our attention to the alleged evidence of Porphyry and Iamblichus, we might consider several other sources that could conceivably be used to support the idea that students of philosophers wrote with impunity in the names of their teachers. In his thirty-third epistle, Seneca indicates that whereas the sayings of the Stoic teachers all differ from one another, those of the Epicureans are unified: "With them, on the other hand, whatever Hermarchus says, or Metrodorus, is ascribed to one source. In that brotherhood, everything that any man utters is spoken under the leadership and commanding authority of one alone."[55] This statement could conceivably be construed as meaning that everything an Epicurean wrote he ascribed to Epicurus. But in fact the comment says nothing about Epicurean authors writing books while claiming to be Epicurus. It is referring to oral communications and indicates that what others in the school say, they attribute to the authority (one might assume) of Epicurus himself. Even if Seneca is referring to writings of the school, the attribution of one's own views to Epicurus could, of course, be accomplished in orthonymous as easily as in forged writings (e.g., by quoting Epicurus).

Suetonius, in his treatise "On Grammarians," says of Antonius Gnipho:

> He wrote a great deal. Atieus Philologus, however, declares that he left but two volumes, "On the Latin Language," maintaining that the other works attributed to him were those of his pupils and not his own (nam cetera scripta discipulorum eius esse non ipsius). Yet his own name is sometimes found in them. (ch. 7)[56]

This comment does come closer to indicating that students of a philosopher might write a book claiming to be their teacher. On closer examination, however, it appears instead to indicate that anonymous books by students were sometimes falsely *attributed* to the teacher. It is not clear what it means that his own name was found in them; it is not obvious, in any event, that it must mean that his name was found in the authorial inscription (i.e., as placed there by the author himself, claiming to be Antonius Gnipho; it could just as well meant that his name is found in, say, an inscription added to the writing by a later editor). In any event, Suetonius does not indicate anything about this being a common practice, let alone an acceptable one. On the contrary, he seems to want to know who actually wrote the books.

Finally, Diogenes Laertius speaks of works written in Pythagoras' name by others. He claims that Pythagoras wrote three treatises, "On Education," "On Statesmanship," and "On Nature"; others were written in his name (*Lives* 8.6–8).

Here again, however, there is no indication that Diogenes saw this as an acceptable practice—that is, as something other than forgery in the negative sense—and he says nothing about it being common. And he, like Suetonius, is interested in knowing who actually wrote the books.

THE PROBLEM OF PORPHYRY

In his extensive analysis of pseudepigraphy and canon, Armin Baum maintains that a key ancient witness to the common and accepted practice, in ancient philosophical schools, of writing treatises in the name of a teacher is the Neoplatonist Porphyry (234–304 CE).[57] In this he is followed by other scholars, including Martina Janssen in an otherwise full and insightful article.[58]

Before evaluating what Porphyry actually says in the passage in question, it is worth pointing out that this alleged witness to the "common" practice in philosophical schools refers only to the school of Pythagoras and, yet more significant, dates 750–800 years after the fact.[59] How useful such a statement could be for understanding what was happening in early Christianity (say, two hundred years earlier) is very much open to question. But is Porphyry even referring to pseudepigraphic practices of Pythagoras' school, so many centuries earlier?

As Baum notes, the passage is not preserved in the Greek manuscript tradition of Porphyry, but only in an Arabic translation. The text is found in the lengthy book by Ibn Abi Usaybi'a, *Kitab 'uyun al-anba' fi tabaqat al-atibba*,[60] which, understandably, Baum did not actually read; he relied instead on the account of B. L. Van der Waerden.[61] I too do not read medieval Arabic. But the passage is important, and so I asked my colleague Carl Ernst, who specializes in Medieval Islam, to translate it for me. The passage does not say what Baum claims it does.

> But as for the books of Pythagoras the sage, which Archytas the Tarentine philosopher collected by himself, they are eighty books. But those that he made special effort, with all his strength, to compile, compose (*ta'līf*), and collect, from all the old men who were of the type of Pythagoras the philosopher, his school, and the inheritors of his sciences, man after man, these were two hundred books in number. And he who was unique in the essence of his intellect [i.e., Archytas] set aside from them the false books ascribed to the tongue of the sage and his name, which shameless people fabricated.

Ibn Abi Usaybi'a goes on to list twelve of the forged books.

Baum argues that in the passage Porphyry differentiates between eighty books that Pythagoras wrote, two hundred that his followers wrote (with impunity) in his name, and twelve that were later forgeries misrepresenting his views. But as can be seen, what the passage instead says is that Pythagoras wrote eighty books, that older men who belonged to the Pythagorean group wrote two hundred books, and that other books, of which Porphyry names twelve, were forgeries in the name of Pythagoras. The key point is this: Porphyry decidedly does not indicate that the two hundred books by Pythagoras' followers were written *in Pythagoras' name*. They were simply written by students of his school.

There is no problem with thinking that the followers of Pythagoras wrote books. We have these books more fully attested. They were written by the likes of Hippodamus, Okkelos, Philoaus, Periktyone, and Phyntis. They are orthonymous, and have been discussed in a number of important studies.[62] In other words, Baum has gotten the situation precisely wrong. The overarching claim of his study is that a book in antiquity was considered a "forgery" only if the *content* was judged not to derive from the named author, and Porphyry is appealed to as a witness—on the false assumption that Porphyry accepted the two hundred pseudepigraphic Pythagorean books since they taught the views of Pythagoras himself. But in fact, Porphyry is irrelevant to the question, because he does not mention two hundred books written by Pythagoras' followers in his name. He speaks only of two hundred books written by Pythagoras' followers.

Moreover, there can be no question about what Porphyry, at least according to this text, thought about books that were falsely produced in Pythagoras' name. Of these he says the following (again, from a private translation of Ernst):

> The criminal individuals who fabricated these lying books that we have mentioned, according to traditions that have reached us, are Aristotle the Younger, Nikos (Nuqūs) known as the essentially erroneous, one of the Cretans called Konios, Mégalos, and Fūkhajawāqā (?), along with others even more reprehensible than they. And that was who proposed to them (others?) the fabrication of these lying books with the tongue of the philosopher Pythagoras and his name, so that [these writings] would be accepted among the moderns because of him, so they would honor, prefer, and share them.

Those who produced books in Pythagoras' name are called "criminal." Their

books are “lying” “fabrications.” They were written pseudepigraphically because by putting Pythagoras’ name on them, the books were more likely to be accepted by their readers. For Porphyry this is a nefarious motivation.

In short, Porphyry cannot be used to establish the “common” practice in the philosophical schools—or even in the Pythagorean school—of publishing writings in the name of a revered teacher with impunity. Some followers of Pythagoras did produce such forged works, but the books were labeled lies and fabrications and the authors were called shameless criminals.

THE WITNESS OF IAMBLICHUS

The only other witness to the pseudepigraphic practices of the Pythagorean school writing within a full millennium of the death of its founder (apart from Diogenes Laertius) is another late antique neo-Platonist, Iamblichus (245–325 CE). Two passages from Iamblichus’ writings are sometimes cited to establish the Pythagorean practices, but only one of them is germane to the question. The first occurs in Iamblichus’ *Life of Pythagoras:* “Of the [Pythagoric] writings that are now circulating, some were written by Pythagoras himself, but others consist of what he was heard to say [τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκροάσεως αὐτοῦ συγγεγράφθαι]; for this reason the authors do not attach their own names to these books but attribute them to Pythagoras as being his (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲ ἑαυτῶν ἐπεφήμιζον αὐτά, ἀλλὰ εἰς Πυθαγόραν ἀνέφερον αὐτὰ ὡς ἐκείνου ὄντα)..”[63] At first glance, this may indeed seem to indicate that Pythagoras’ students published their own treatises in his name; but in fact, Iamblichus is referring to a very different phenomenon: the publication of Pythagoras’ lecture notes by his students. These publications literally contain his own words, not those of the writers, and so it would not have been proper for them to claim the books for themselves. I will be dealing with the question of published lecture notes shortly.

The other reference in Iamblichus’ *Life of Pythagoras*, on the other hand, does in fact deal with the publication of works by others in Pythagoras’ name, and appears to say what scholars have said it says: “It was a fine custom of theirs also to ascribe and assign everything to Pythagoras, and only very seldom to claim personal fame for their discoveries, for there are very few of them indeed to whom works are ascribed personally.”[64] Here Iamblichus indicates his own view about what happened among the followers of Pythagoras so many centuries earlier. But the relevance of this passage for understanding widespread views in antiquity is much open to dispute.

The first thing to note is that Iamblichus is referring only to the followers of

Pythagoras. Nowhere does he say this was a widespread practice—or indeed, a practice at all—in any of the other philosophical schools. Moreover, it cannot be stressed enough that Iamblichus is writing eight hundred years after Pythagoras. Are there any grounds for thinking that he would actually know the practices of his school? If he does know, what are his sources of information? If they once existed, they do not exist any longer; this is the first we learn of such a practice.

It may be that Iamblichus is referring not to Pythagoras' immediate followers but to the later Pythagoreans of the Hellenistic period. But here too he would be speaking of literary practices from four hundred to five hundred years earlier. How would he know about these? And if he is right, why are these practices not mentioned by any authors—including biographers of Pythagoras—writing earlier? In fact, the questions keep on coming.

LATER SUPPORTERS OF IAMBLICHUS' VIEW

It is true that two much-later Neoplatonists—Olympiodorus from the mid-sixth century CE and somewhat later his student Elias—also make this claim about the Pythagoreans. Elias is dependent on Olympiodorus and so cannot count as independent evidence. And Olympiodorus himself may simply be relying on the same neo-Platonic tradition as found in Iamblichus from more than two centuries earlier. In any event, Olympiodorus is the first writer to give us anything resembling a taxonomy of motives for the practices of pseudepigraphy. In his *Prolegomenon* Olympiodorus states his desire to establish the ways in which books are "forged" (or better, "bastardized," provided with false names; διὰ πόσους τρόπους ἐνοθεύοντο τὰ βιβλία) and the criteria one can use to "distinguish the genuine from the forged" ((διαχωρίζειν τὰ γνήσια ἀπὸ τῶν νόθων). In Olympiodorus' judgment, books are forged/provided with false authorial names for three reasons: from the ambition/ambitious rivalry (φιλοτιμία) of kings; the affection/good will of students/disciples; and the homonymy of writers, writings, or notes/commentaries (ὑπομνήματα).[65]

His third category shows that he is concerned simply with the circulation of books under a wrong name (not forgery in the sense I am using it), since homonymy, as we have seen, does not involve a false authorial claim. He explicates his reference to the φιλοτιμία of kings by speaking specifically of Juba, king of Libya, who loved Pythagorean writings; Ptolemy Philadelphius, who loved Aristotelian writings; and Pisistratus tyrant of Athens, who loved Homeric writings. These kings, he indicates, were willing to pay gold for their beloved texts, leading enterprising scholars to invent them. His second category

conforms with the statement of Iamblichus: students wrote books in the names of their teachers. He claims that this is true of “all” the books written in the name of Pythagoras. “For Pythagoras left no writings … and so his disciples out of affection/good will put the name Pythagoras on their writings (οἱ οὖν μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ δι᾽εὔνοιαν ποιήσαντες συγγράμματα ἐπέγραψαν τὸ ὄνομα Πυθαγόρου).” As a result, for Olympiodorus, all of the writings in the name of Pythagoras are νόθα.

This statement is sometimes taken as an authoritative account of what happened in the philosophical schools.[66] Here again, however, it is not clear whether Olympiodorus is referring to forgeries in the name of Pythagoras by later writers or to publication of essays based on students’ lecture notes (about which, below). And of course if Olympiodorus assumed that Pythagoras published nothing, then it only makes sense that he must draw the corollary: books that bear Pythagoras’ name must have been written by students. And if they were written by students, they must have been produced with good will toward the master. And so it must have been an established and accepted practice.

As inexorable as the logic may have seemed to Olympiodorus, it cannot be seen as compelling today. Pythagoras was in fact widely thought to have written numerous books (although a number of ancients denied it). His followers did write books, but in their own names. There were, to be sure, books claiming to be written by Pythagoras that he did not himself write, just as there were books falsely written in the names of Socrates, Epicurus, Jesus, Peter, and Paul. To that extent, the practice was widespread. But this does not mean it was widely respected and approved. On the contrary, every indication is that even in antiquity the practice was widely condemned and censured. Whether forgers—Pythagorean or otherwise—themselves took the matter lightly is another question, one we will return to at the end of this chapter.

In any event, Olympiodorus lived a thousand years after Pythagoras himself. He shows no evidence of knowing what happened in the wake of Pythagoras, a millennium earlier. There is no reason to assume he is doing anything but repeating hearsay that had been in circulation in Neoplatonic circles since at least the time of Iamblichus, himself writing eight hundred years after the fact.

One is more or less left with an off-the-cuff comment by Iamblichus in support of this alleged practice in Pythagorean circles. It comes as no surprise that recent studies of the matter by scholars of Pythagoreanism draw a strongly negative conclusion, as summarized forcefully by Leonid Zhmud: “The only one (!), who reports such a practice is once again Iamblichus. Up to that point we do

not hear of any concrete instance in which a Pythagorean ascribed his discoveries to Pythagoras, and we have furthermore no indication that such a tendency existed in his school."[67]

SOME COUNTER-INDICATIONS

I will draw some conclusions about the practices of forgery in the philosophical schools shortly, after raising several other issues. For now it is enough to provide some counterevidence to Iamblichus' assertion.

It is important to recognize that different Pythagoreans (even in the "school") had their own views and perspectives, and that they had no qualms about expressing them.[68] Most of these later authors wrote orthonymously, and we know of their writings. Others to be sure claimed to be Pythagoras. But this was not seen as an acceptable, let alone a widespread, practice. When these authors were detected, their works were described as forgeries. We have already seen this to be the case with Porphyry and Diogenes Laertius.

Moreover, there were clear reasons for later Pythagoreans wanting to make their writings appear to derive from the great man himself. Among other things, H. Balz and others have argued that the practice provided a greater antiquity for certain Pythagorean views, a desideratum in the face of competing claims of other philosophical traditions.[69] In addition, we have other evidence of Pythagorean authors intentionally trying to deceive their readers about their authorial claims (what would have been the point if writing in the name of Pythagoras was widely accepted?). We have already seen that King Juba of Mauretania was willing to pay cash on the barrel head for writings of Pythagoras. Also, we have reports of forged Pythagorean manuscripts being artificially "enhanced" to make them look old and therefore authentic.[70] We also have several ancient accounts of faux "discoveries" of Pythagorean texts, meant to assure others of their great antiquity.[71]

There were numerous reasons for Pythagoreans to want to claim that their own writings were the productions of Pythagoras himself. But there is little indeed to suggest that they did so out of humility in a practice that was widely acknowledged in antiquity to be acceptable and sanctioned.

THE PUBLICATION OF LECTURE NOTES

As was already intimated, when it comes to the publication of students' lecture notes we are dealing with a different matter altogether. So far as we can tell, it

was widely thought that the written dissemination of a teacher's "classroom" instruction should be under the teacher's name, since he was the one, after all, who had spoken the words. Not all teachers approved of the practice. But what was definitely derided was the alternative of publishing a teacher's words as one's own.

Quintilian gives an interesting instance of the practice, a case in which he was not thoroughly pleased that his words had been published by others:

> Two books on the art of rhetoric are at present circulating under my name, although never published by me or composed for such a purpose. One is a two days' lecture which was taken down by the boys who were my audience. The other consists of such notes as my good pupils succeeded in taking down from a course of lectures on a somewhat more extensive scale. I appreciate their kindness, but they showed an excess of enthusiasm and a certain lack of discretion in doing my utterances the honour of publication.[72]

Quintilian explains the situation because he is now publishing a new treatise on the same topic, and wants it to be clearly understood that the new iteration will be superior to the two published by students in his name.

On the other hand, as we have seen already, students who published their teacher's words as their own were severely chastised for plagiarism. This is instanced in the case of Empedocles, mentioned by Diogenes Laertius: "Timaeus in the ninth book of his *Histories* says he was a pupil of Pythagoras, adding that, having been convicted at that time of stealing his discourses (λέγων ὅτι καταγνωσθεὶς ἐπὶ λογοκλοπίᾳ τότε) he was, like Plato, excluded from taking part in the discussions of the school" (*Lives*, 8.54).

The clearest instance, however, comes in one that is self-attested. Arrian, as is well known, did not attempt to write his own philosophical reflections based on the teachings of Epictetus, but instead recorded, to the best of his ability, what Epictetus himself said. Had he published the teachings under his own name, he would have been guilty, by ancient standards, of plagiarism (witness Empedocles:λογοκλοπία). And so he makes his intentions quite clear at the outset of the Discourses:

> Arrian to Lucius Gellius, greeting: I have not composed these Words of Epictetus as one might be said to "compose" books of this kind, nor have I of my own act published them to the world; indeed, I

> acknowledge that I have not "composed" them at all. But whatever I heard him say I used to write down, word for word, as best I could, endeavoring to preserve it as a memorial, for my own future use, of his way of thinking and the frankness of his speech.[73]

In short, it was perfectly acceptable to publish the notes of a teacher in his name; but to publish them in one's own name, as if they were one's own teachings, was seen as plagiarism. This is quite different, however, from writing one's own treatise and claiming that it was someone else's, even a beloved teacher's. If the words did not go back to the teacher himself, this would be forgery.[74]

MEDICAL SCHOOLS

Much the same can be said about the ancient medical schools. Here again there are no indications that it was an accepted practice to publish one's own writing under the name of a beloved teacher as an act of humility or for the sake of giving credit where credit was due. Critics were, on the contrary, intent on knowing who actually produced the work. Nowhere is that clearer than in the one case we are best informed about, the Galenic evaluation of the Hippocratic corpus.[75]

We have in excess of one hundred Greek and more than thirty Latin writings in the name of Hippocrates. In such books as "Concerning the Genuine and Forged (*νόθα*) Writings of Hippocrates," Galen was particularly intent, as the title indicates, on determining which of the writings were genuinely those of the great physician himself and which were produced instead by his sons and students in his name. The latter writings he labeled as νόθα.

There were many possibilities. Some works, in his opinion, were authentically by Hippocrates. Others, such as *De victu acutorum*, were essentially authentic but were published posthumously by someone else, as shown by its disorderly train of thought and the occasional interpolation.[76] In some instances Galen ventured to indicate who the actual authors of the inauthentic works were, for example, Hippocrates' sons Dracon and Thessalus, his son-in-law Polybus, and others of his students. In other instances Galen had to resort to indicating that a work was not authentic, without suggesting the name of an author. Sometimes the more complicated works, such as *De natura hominis*, were said to have multiple authors, one of whom might have been Hippocrates.

As we have seen, Armin Baum has recently maintained that ancient authors

considered books authentic so long as the contents could be attributed to the named author, whether or not he actually produced the book. To this end he sees as most significant Galen's views of the seven books on Epidemics. Books 1 and 3, Galen indicates, were actually by Hippocrates. Books 2 and 6, however, were composed by Thessalus after his father's death, on the basis of papers that he left behind. Galen does not suggest that these two books be deprived of Hippocratic authorship, but that they be entitled instead *"Books 1 and 2 of the Notes of Hippocrates" On Epidemics*. Since they are not to be attributed to their real author (Thessalus), in Baum's view, this shows that what matters is not the composer of the work, but the ideas in it. If these are Hippocratic, then the books are rightly attributed to him.[77]

To an extent Baum is right about this, but not for the reason he thinks. It is not simply that the thoughts and ideas happen to be those of Hippocrates. What is important to note is that the books were written on the basis of papers that Hippocrates left behind. In other words, this is analogous to a student publishing the lecture notes of his teacher. The words really are the teacher's, and so should be attributed to him. To publish them under one's own name would be plagiarism. This is different altogether from publishing one's own views and claiming that they are someone else's. Galen labeled Hippocratic writings of that sort νόθα. For Galen it was extremely important to know which books were γνήσια. Books not giving the words of Hippocrates himself were inauthentic.

Galen was not the only one interested in such matters. From much later comes the clear statement of Augustine, who expresses well the general sentiment of antiquity:

> But even in worldly writings there were well-known authors under whose names many works were produced later, and they were repudiated either because they did not agree with the writings that were certainly theirs or because, at the time when those authors wrote, these writings did not merit to be recognized and to be handed on and commended to posterity by them or their friends. Not to mention others, were not certain books that were produced under the name Hippocrates, the highly renowned physician, rejected as authoritative by physicians? Nor did a certain similarity of topics and language offer them any help. For, compared to the books that it was clear were really Hippocrates' books, they were judged inferior, and they were not known at the same time at which the rest of his writings were recognized as truly his. (*Contra Faust*. 33.6)

Note carefully: determining the actual author mattered, not just to Augustine but to the critics that he references as writing before him. If a book is not authored by its alleged author, it lacks the authority that the imputed author bore. It is, on those grounds, "rejected."

CONCLUSION: THE USE OF FORGERY IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS

One passage in Tertullian is sometimes cited to support the idea that it was an acceptable practice in antiquity for a disciple to publish a book in the name of his teacher.[78] This, however, is a complete misreading of Tertullian's point. What he says is this: "That which Mark produced is stated to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was. Luke's narrative also they usually attribute to Paul. It is permissible for the works which disciples published to be regarded as belonging to their masters."[79]

Contrary to the common interpretation of this passage, Tertullian is not referring to pseudepigraphic practices, but to the authority that lay behind the canonical Gospels. That is to say, Tertullian is not indicating that Mark published his Gospel by calling it the Gospel of Peter, or that Luke published the Gospel of Paul. Each Evangelist wrote—in Tertullian's view—in his own name, but with the authority of another. The passage is thus of no relevance to the question of pseudepigraphy, let alone to the pseudepigraphic practices of the philosophical schools.

So too, Baum claims that since Justin Martyr refers to the Gospel of Mark as the Memoirs of Peter (Dial. 106.3), he considered it acceptable to publish under the name of one's teacher: the book's contents go back to Peter and are authoritative on those grounds.[80] This too is flawed reasoning. For one thing, P. Pilhofer has made a convincing case that Justin is not referring to canonical Mark at all, but to the Gospel of Peter (Justin never refers to the Gospel of Mark by name).[81] Beyond that, we have no evidence to suggest that the Second Gospel was ever circulated under Peter's name. If Justin is referring to it, he is describing it, not naming it. This is not at all the same as a writing claiming to be written by Socrates that was instead produced by a later follower. So too Origen's comment that Hebrews can be accepted as Pauline by those who want to do so, even though it was not written by Paul, because its views are consonant with Paul's. Here again we are not dealing with a book that *claims* to be written by Paul which can be accepted as Pauline, even though Paul did not write it. Hebrews is anonymous.

Forgery involves false authorial claims. Contrary to what is often said, the practice was not accepted, so far as we can tell, even within the philosophical schools—except, perhaps, by the people who practiced it, to whom we will return at the end of this chapter. Critics of the ancient world, however, found the practice objectionable. That is why they are so invested in knowing who actually wrote what. If it did not matter whether the book was written by a follower of Pythagoras or of Hippocrates or of Socrates, there would have been no reason for critics to invest so much effort in engaging in their critical investigations.

We know how falsifiers of philosophical texts were sometimes treated, as they tried to put their own words on the pens of their revered teachers: Athenodorus was removed from his duties in the Pergamum Library for "correcting" the writings of Zeno.[82] And we know how plagiarists were sometimes treated in the schools: Empedocles was forbidden access to the lectures of Pythagoras.[83] The reason for these attitudes is patent. Ancient readers of texts were widely concerned to know who the actual authors were. That, as Speyer repeatedly reminds us, was the entire reason for the extensive practice of Echtheitskritik.

It was, to be sure, acceptable to publish lecture notes in the name of the teacher who gave the lectures. This is what Arian did with the Discourses of Epictetus, and what some of the followers of both Hippocrates and Pythagoras did. But to write one's own work and to claim that it was the work of another—even a beloved teacher—was not acceptable. Such works were classified as νόθα.

To Establish the Validity of One's Views

There is one factor that ties together most of the motivations discussed so far, and I give it here as a final category even though in fact it appears to have broad application. Forgers typically produced writings in the name of others in order to establish the validity of their own views. As discussed earlier, the name of an author could carry authority. An author whose name carried no authority would sometimes claim a name that did.

This understanding of a forger's motivation comes to be clearly stated both within our period and afterward, never more so than in the sixth-century Christian Neoplatonist David in his comments on the writings of Porphyry: "When someone is unimportant and insignificant, and he wants his writing to be read, he writes in the name of an ancient and influential person, so that through that one's influence he can get his writing accepted."[84] Porphyry himself, as we have seen, indicated that this was what motivated the authors of the pseudo-

Pythagorean writings. Aulus Gellius concurred with respect to a different instance: “Many fictions of this kind seem to have been attached to the name of Democritus by ignorant men, who sheltered themselves under his reputation and authority.”[85]

Augustine cites this as the reason for the production of an anti-Christian letter embracing magical practices in the name of Christ himself:

> And it is quite possible that either the enemies of the name of Christ, or certain parties who thought that they might impart to this kind of execrable arts the weight of authority drawn from so glorious a name, may have written things of that nature under the name of Christ and the apostles.[86]

So too in the one instance we have from late antiquity of a Christian detected in the act of forgery, Salvian of Marseilles, who indicates that had he written the book *Ad Ecclesiam* in his own name, rather than in the name of Timothy, no one would have paid it any heed. And so he “wisely selected a pseudonym for his book for the obvious reason that he did not wish the obscurity of his own person to detract from the influence of his otherwise valuable book.” Or, as he then says, “For this reason the present writer chose to conceal his identity in every respect for fear that his true name would perhaps detract from the influence of his book, which really contains much that is exceedingly valuable.”[87]

The same motivation is explicitly attested for the analogous case of textual falsification, in which one’s own words are claimed to be the words of another; and so Rufinus indicates that heretics altered the writings of faithful Christian authorities: “By this means, of course, the assertion of the man’s own heresy was more easily advanced under the names of all the most learned and renowned among the ecclesiastical writers in view of the fact that some brilliant men among the Catholics appeared to have thought likewise.”[88] Similarly, some heretics tried to pass off a “false teaching” of Tertullian on the Holy Spirit by inserting his tractate on the Trinity, unnamed, into a collection of the writings of the impeccable Cyprian: “The result was that the heretics found a way of gaining credit for their perfidy by means of the authority of such a great man.”[89]

Within Christian circles there seems to be no reason to doubt that the need for authority—in particular, apostolic authority—is what motivated most forgers to practice their craft.[90] That the apostles were unique authorities is evident from the earliest postapostolic times, for example in Ignatius, himself no mean

authority, who could nonetheless tell his readers in Tralles: “But I have not thought that I, a condemned man, should give you orders like an apostle.”[91] Later it was seen that apostolic books alone could carry Scriptural authority, as indicated by the Muratorian Fragment at the end of the second century, by Origen soon thereafter, and throughout our period, up to its end with Augustine.[92] The importance of apostolic writings for establishing Christian doctrine can be seen in a myriad of places throughout our literature; as just one example we might take the words of Jerome about the virginity of Mary: “That God was born of a virgin we believe, because we read [that it was so]. That Mary was married after she gave birth we do not believe, because we do not read [that it was so]” (Natum deum esse de virgine credimus, quia legimus. Mariam nupsisse post partum non credimus, quia non legimus; *Adv. Helv*. 19).

Small wonder, then, that forgers wrote so many Gospels, epistles, apocalypses, and other works in the names of apostles. Among the names that carried authority, theirs carried the greatest authority of all. But they were not the only authority figures of the early church: Ignatius, Origen, Augustine, and Jerome themselves carried some weight, and so it is no surprise that forgers penned writings in their names as well—and in the names of others, whenever deemed appropriate. The issue was authority, and authority was indelibly linked to the names of authors.

TECHNIQUES

Forty years ago Wolfgang Speyer made a tantalizing claim that remains no less true today: “The history of literary gullibility has yet to be written.”[93] Still, despite the astounding credulity of readers—modern as well as ancient—forgers have always made efforts to cover up the traces of their deceit. In many instances, it is simply enough for a forger to claim to be someone other than who he is. Anyone in antiquity who came across a letter of Paul addressed to a church (in Thessalonica, in Ephesus, in Colossae, etc.) naturally thought that Paul had written the letter, unless there was a glaring mistake that indicated otherwise. The forger’s craft involved making sure there were no such mistakes: anachronisms, inconsistencies, or gaffes. But more than that, many, possibly most, forgers went out of their way to make their work believable. Some forgers, of course, were more skilled at deceit than others. The following are some of the ploys they typically used.

Imitation of Style

A good forger who wanted his readers to assume that he really was who he said he was tried to imitate the writing style of the author he was claiming to be. The ability to effect imitation was all part of a rhetorical education in ethopoeia, as Cribiore and many others have noted.[94] Not all forgers were good at it, and some apparently did not even make the effort. This was possibly the case with the famous incident recounted by Galen in *De propriis libris*, where an amateur scholar informed a dupe that the book in question was not by Galen, simply on the basis of the style of the first two lines. Caveat emptor. But most forgers almost certainly did their best, often with spectacular success. It took many centuries for anyone to realize that the writing style of Ephesians was not that of Paul.

We have only one instance from antiquity in which a forger actually acknowledges what he has done (not counting Salvian, who does not explicitly admit his guilt). This is the second century CE Mithridates, who forged a cover letter for a second edition of the letters of the general Brutus—from three centuries earlier—explaining why he himself had produced pseudepigraphic responses from the recipients of the various missives.[95] Among other things, Mithridates claims that in producing the letters he has tried to replicate the plausible contents of what they would have written and to have done so in an appropriately imitative style. But he admits it was not easy: "how difficult it turns out [to be] to contend with another person's skill when it is hard even to keep up one's own!"[96]

Verisimilitudes

In addition to using a familiar name and trying to imitate style, forgers would typically insert verisimilitudes in order to ground yet further the plausibility of their writings. As we will see when we turn to the Pastoral epistles, proponents of authenticity have long maintained that the personal touches that pervade 2 Timothy are the clearest indication that this book (and, often, by implication, its two companions) was actually written by Paul. Why would a forger bother to remind his recipient of their past relationship in such intimate detail? "I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you.… I remember your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives on in you" (1:3–5). Why would a forger tell a feigned recipient to be sure to "bring the cloak I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, and especially the parchments" (4:13)?

For scholars of forgery, the answer is obvious. A forger would invent such

verisimilitudes precisely in order to convince the reader that he is who he says he is. This has been shown beyond any doubt in a now-famous article by Norbert Brox, "Zu den persönlichen Notizen der Pastoralbriefe,"[97] which demonstrates that "personal notes" are a standard ruse of the forger. Brox's position has been strengthened by further researchers, such as Lewis Donelson, who appeals to the forged letters of Plato, especially letters 12 and 13, in support:

> The particular genre of the pseudepigraphical letter displays in abundance the exact type of deception we find in the pastorals. The careless references to mundane affairs of daily life, the specific requests for ordinary and seemingly insignificant objects to be delivered, and even the attempt to display personal feelings are all fully documented in other letters.[98]

First-Person Narratives

One particular method of verisimilitude involves the use of first-person narrative, in which an author not only claims to be someone other than who he is, but also narrates events as a personal participant. We have already seen this ploy at work, for example in the canonical non-pseudepigraphic forgery, Ecclesiastes, where the author provides "autobiographical" discussions as King Solomon, and in the embedded forgery of the Ascension of Isaiah. It was also used in the earlier apocalypses, such as Daniel and Enoch, as well as in apocalypses of the Christian tradition such as those of Paul and Peter. It can be found in other narrative accounts too, such as the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter or the Gospel of Peter, or in narratives embedded in other sorts of texts, as in 2 Peter's first-person "recollection" of the transfiguration. The value of the first-person narrative is that it makes the writer an authority not only because of his name but also because of his firsthand experiences. This was clearly recognized, yet again, by Speyer:

> First person narrative and eyewitness report immediately inspire the belief in the hearer that the narrator has himself experienced that which he recounts. Such first-person narration and eyewitness report are practically characteristic of miracle stories and liars' tales. First-person narrative appears no less frequently in forgeries, frequently in conjunction with a false authorial claim.[99]

Discovery Narratives

An even bolder ploy was used by some forgers in order to explain why it is that a writing by an ancient author was not widely known by earlier readers. The reason: the book was hidden and discovered only in recent times.

Possibly the most famous instance among pagan writings is the account of the Trojan War allegedly written by a participant, Dictys of Crete, a companion of Idomeneus, widely read as authentic throughout the Middle Ages. The Preface of the account, by Lucius Septimius, indicates how the book came to be uncovered, through pure serendipity.

> After many centuries the tomb of Dictys at Cnossos (formerly the seat of the Cretan king) collapsed with age. Then shepherds, wandering near the ruins, stumbled upon a little box skillfully enclosed in tin. Thinking it was treasure, they soon broke it open, but brought to light, instead of gold or some other kind of wealth, books written on linden tablets. Their hopes thus frustrated, they took their find to Praxis, the owner of that place. Praxis had the books transliterated into the Attic alphabet and presented them to the Roman Emperor Nero.[100]

The author of the account then indicates that he has translated the books into Latin, thus explaining both how they have mysteriously now appeared and why they are not circulating in a form of ancient Greek. The reality is that the entire set of books, preface and all, were forged.[101]

We have already seen a comparable account in the Pythagorean writings falsely claiming to be written by none other than the second (legendary) king of Rome, Numa, as reported by both Livy (*History of Rome*, 40, 29) and Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, 13, 84–87). Livy indicates that the "discovery" was made in 181 BCE in a field under construction. Workers uncovered two large stone chests with lids fastened by lead. On them were inscriptions in Latin and Greek. One chest was said to be the sarcophagus of Numa Pompilius; the other was said to contain his books. There was no trace of the body in the one chest, but the other contained two bundles tied with waxed rope, each containing seven books, "not merely whole, but looking absolutely fresh" (non integros modo sed recentissima specie; *History of Rome* 40.29).[102]

Seven of these books dealt with pontifical law (of which, by tradition, Numa was the author); the seven in Greek dealt with "a system of philosophy which might have been current at that time" (septem Graeci de disciplina sapientiae

quae illius aetatis esse potuit). Valerius Antias indicates that “they were Pythagorean, confirmation of the common belief, which says that Numa was a pupil of Pythagoras, being arranged by a plausible invention.” As the books circulated, officials began to be worried about them; the praetor urbanus, Quintus Petilius, thought that a good portion of what was in them could be seen as subversive of religion: pleraque dissolvendarum religionum esse. After consultation he decided to have them publicly burned.

Livy is not explicit about the authenticity of the books, but Pliny clearly suggests they were forged. The reason for thinking so: as an authority from the time of the alleged discovery pointed out, it was difficult to believe that books could have lasted so long without deteriorating.

These pagan examples have their clear counterparts in the best-known discovery narrative of Christian writings, the Apocalypse of Paul. The visions of Paul are introduced with this validation:

> In the consulship of Theodosius Augustus the younger and Cynegius, a certain nobleman was then living in Tarsus, in the house which was that of Saint Paul; an angel appeared in the night and revealed it to him, saying that he should open the foundations of the house and should publish what he found; but he thought that these things were dreams.
>
> But the angel coming for the third time beat him and forced him to open the foundation. And digging he found a marble box inscribed on the sides; there was the revelation of Saint Paul, and his shoes in which he walked teaching the word of God. But he feared to open that box and brought it to the judge; when he had received it, the judge, because it was sealed with lead, sent it to the emperor Theodosius, fearing lest it might be something else; when the emperor had received it he opened it, and found the revelation of Saint Paul, a copy of which he sent to Jerusalem and retained the original himself.[103]

As should be clear from these sundry examples, discovery narratives functioned not only to explain the long-absence of a book or set of books, but also to establish their authoritative credentials. In many instances the “discovery” is a result of divine intervention. This was the case as well, for example, with the “discovery” of bronze tablets by Alexander, Lucian’s “False Prophet.”[104] These tablets, which were planted by Alexander himself, indicated that Asclepeius and his father Apollo were planning to take up residence in Abonoteichus, the location of Alexander’s soon-to-be-established faux oracle (*Alexander the False*

Prophet, 10).

Lucian was not the only one who recognized how a discovery narrative could serve as a ploy. We also have Cicero's scathing comments on the "discovery" of lots as a means of divination. Cicero was quite forthright in his own opinion of the practice: "And pray what is the need, do you think, to talk about the casting of lots? It is much like playing at morra, dice, or knuckle-bones, in which recklessness and luck prevail rather than reflection and judgement."[105] But those who justified the use of lots claimed divine authorization, from a standard discovery narrative:

> According to the annals of Praeneste Numerius Suffustius, who was a distinguished man of noble birth, was admonished by dreams, often repeated, and finally even by threats, to split open a flint rock which was lying in a designated place. Frightened by the visions and disregarding the jeers of his fellow-townsmen he set about doing as he had been directed. And so when he had broken open the stone, the lots sprang forth carved on oak, in ancient characters. The site where the stone was found is religiously guarded to this day. It is hard by the statue of the infant Jupiter, who is represented as sitting with Juno in the lap of Fortune and reaching for her breast, and it is held in the highest reverence by mothers.[106]

At other times discovery narratives were used to justify or explain political actions as foretold by a divine source (Suetonius, *Julius* 81 and *Galba* 9, 2). We are fortunate to have a full study of the phenomenon, covering these and a host of other related issues, in another important contribution by Wolfgang Speyer.[107]

Warnings Against Forged Writings

An equally clever, if less elaborate, ruse occurs in forgeries that warn their readers against reading forgeries. Who would suspect a forger of condemning his own practice? Such warnings occur occasionally in Christian writings; in these contexts, the warning is invariably directed against the forgeries of "false" teachers, as opposed to the writer who issues the warning, who sees himself, of course, as representing the truth. As already mentioned, we have a fairly elaborate example near the end of our period in the Apostolic Constitutions:

> We have sent all these things to you, that you may know our opinion, what it is; and that you may not receive those books which obtain in our name, but are written by the ungodly. For you are not to attend to the names of the apostles, but to the nature of the things, and their settled opinions. For we know that Simon and Cleobius and their followers, have compiled poisonous books under the name of Christ and of His disciples, and do carry them about in order to deceive you who love Christ, and us His servants. And among the ancients also some have written apocryphal books of Moses, and Enoch, and Adam, and Isaiah, and David, and Elijah, and of the three patriarchs, pernicious and repugnant to the truth. (6.16)[108]

Later in the text the forger issues a more severe warning: "If any one publicly reads in the Church the spurious books of the ungodly, as if they were holy, to the destruction of the people and of the clergy, let him be deprived" (8.47.60).

Also as we have seen, a similar ploy appears already near the beginning of the period of our concern, in 2 Thess. 2:2. Here an author falsely claiming to be Paul warns against a letter "as if by us." An analogous concern is expressed by the forger of the Epistula Petri and the Contestio of the Pseudo-Clementine literature, whose false author warns his ostensible reader to protect his writings against falsifications.

Material and Literary Prophylaxes

Orthonymous writings sometimes employed forms of material and literary prophylaxis to assure their readers of their authenticity. Not surprisingly, forgers occasionally took the cue and inserted such forms of protection in their own works as a subterfuge. In the documentary realm we learn from Suetonius that Nero made provisions for the protection of wills: "It was in his [Nero's] reign that a protection against forgers (adversus falsarios) was first devised, by having no tablets signed that were not bored with holes through which a cord was thrice passed."[109] Sometimes authenticity was "guaranteed" by a sign or seal, as when Augustine indicates in Letter 59: "I have sent this letter sealed with a ring which has a head of a man looking to one side."[110] At other times the wording of a writing itself was to be taken as a sign of authenticity, as in the thirteenth letter of Plato, widely thought to be forged: "Plato to Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse, Wishes well-doing. Let this greeting not only commence my letter but serve at the same time as a token that it is from me" (σύμβολον ὅτι παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐστίν).[111]

Something similar occurs in 2 Thessalonians, where some interpreters have thought that the author doth protest too much: "The greeting is in my own hand —the hand of Paul—which is a sign in my every epistle; this is how I write" (3:17).

Authors who wanted to implement a more sophisticated form of prophylaxis would sometimes resort to the use of embedded acrostics. Dionysius of Halicarnassus indicates that the acrostic was the mark of the pagan Sybilline oracles. After the collection of oracles was burned in the fire of 83 BCE, the Roman senate sent out envoys to collect copies from various places, especially Erythrea in Asia. But not all those collected were judged authentic. As Dionysius indicates: "Some of these are found to be interpolations among the genuine Sibylline oracles, being recognized as such by means of the so-called acrostics. In all this I am following the account given by Terentius Varro in his work on religion."[112]

A later Christian forger accordingly followed suit and produced at least part of what is now book 8 of the Oracula Sibyllina with an elaborate acrostic that celebrated its own theme. The first letters of lines 217–50 produce the words ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ. Acrostics could perform a variety of functions in forged works, as we saw at the outset with the mischievous Dionysius the Renegade and his pseudo-Sophoclean *Parthenopaeus*.

Confounding Through Intercalation

As a final technique of authentication, I might mention the practice of inserting forged material into writings judged to be authentic, in order to establish credentials through association. We have seen a comparable ploy with respect to the treatise of Tertullian on the Trinity, which according to Rufinus (*De adult. libr. Origen*) was inserted into a manuscript that otherwise contained the authentic letters of Cyprian, in an attempt to validate Tertullian's (discredited) views of the Holy Spirit. In this case, the Tertullian work was not forged; by leaving off the author's name, however, the culprit(s) managed to pass the work off as that of a respected and unquestioned authority.

Similar tricks were used by other pagan and Christian forgers. And so, for example, it is widely held that the epistles of Plato—most of them forged—acquired their standing by being placed in a corpus that contained, as well, writings that were authentic. And the six forged letters of the Long Recension of Ignatius were intermingled with the authentic seven, which were themselves interpolated by the forger of the six. In both these instances the perpetrators were

remarkably successful; their handiwork was not uncovered until relatively modern times.

THE QUESTION OF INTENT

At the outset of this chapter I stressed the importance of differentiating between an author's intention and her motivation. Intention involves what an author wants to accomplish; motivation involves her reasons for wanting to accomplish it. There were numerous motivations that drove ancient authors to produce forgeries. In virtually every instance, however, their intention was the same. It was to convince their readers that they were the person they claimed to be. Their intention, in other words, was deceit.[113]

Many scholars have argued otherwise, maintaining that no deceit was involved in the production of literary pseudepigrapha. This view flies in the face of the convincing arguments of such older scholars as J. S. Candlish and Frederik Torm, the latter of whom could write already some eighty years ago that the idea that pseudonymous writings were widely seen in antiquity simply as a literary form is a "modern invention."[114] The intervening years, regrettably, have seen no shortage of scholars who have subscribed to this "modern invention" of the notion of a literary forgery not meant to deceive its readers. Most of these scholars are experts in religion, and specifically in the New Testament. Their own intentions are in most instances clear: to absolve the authors of ancient forgeries of any guilt involved with lying and deception. All are heirs of the discredited scholars that Torm had in mind, such as the nineteenth-century J. Bernays: "Pagans, Jews and Christians have made use of the same [literary form]—one with greater, the other with lesser skill, but all without experiencing even the slightest scruple. This appeared to them to be a mere game of hide and seek, in which one deemed neither oneself nor another as a true forger."[115] In the English world some such views were expressed repeatedly, for example in the classic work on the Pastorals by P. N. Harrison: The author "was not conscious of misrepresenting the Apostle in any way; he was not consciously deceiving anybody; it is not, indeed, necessary to suppose that he did deceive anybody."[116]

Even though such views have long been discredited by scholars of ancient forgery, they continue to live on among Neutestamentlers, in part, no doubt, because those in the guild rely on the work of others in the guild, and do not as a rule read widely outside of it, for example in the work of scholars of ancient forgery. And so, for example, we find in a recent introduction to the New

Testament by P. Achtemeier, J. Green, and M. Thompson a repetition of the old chestnut: “Pseudonymity appears to have been primarily a literary technique, and not one meant to deliberately deceive its readers.”[117] Or writing in the wake of his student David Meade,[118] James Dunn can assert that an ancient pseudepigrapher standing in a(nother author’s) tradition “could present his message as the message of the originator of that stream of tradition, because in his eyes that is what it was.… There was no intention to deceive, and almost certainly the final readers were not in fact deceived.”[119]

Similar views are expressed by commentators who want to insist that New Testament pseudepigrapha are “transparent fictions”—meaning that the readers were meant to see through them and in fact did see through them, so that no deception was involved. This is R. Bauckham’s claim with respect to 2 Peter: “Petrine authorship was intended to be an entirely transparent fiction.”[120] Even as good a scholar as Luke Timothy Johnson can write with approbation: “Later scholars [i.e., after Schleiermacher] became more sophisticated about pseudonymity, recognizing that it was both prevalent in antiquity and often a transparent fiction that did not seek to deceive.”[121] Such views are virtually ubiquitous among New Testament commentators.[122]

Scholars who have considered the early Christian pseudepigrapha not in a cultural vacuum, however, but in relation to the broader phenomenon have, as a rule, taken an opposite stand. In his presidential address to the SBL, for example, Bruce Metzger asked the rhetorical question: “How can it be so confidently known that such productions ‘would deceive no one’? Indeed if nobody was taken in by the device of pseudepigraphy, it is difficult to see why it was adopted at all.”[123] The problematic notion of a “transparent fiction” was more carefully exposed, recently, by Annette Merz:

> The basic problem with this assumption of a transparent pseudepigraphy in ancient Christianity is that neither in the texts themselves are there any kinds of signals to the implied reader that allow us to discern a consciousness of this supposed genre, nor do we encounter pointers in other sources to such an attitude on the part of recipients.[124]

That deception was involved in the production of forgeries is the firm and emphatic conclusion of all the major studies of forgery, for example, those of Speyer, Brox, Grafton, and Baum. And for good reasons, as we will see. More representative of this less-apologetic perspective is the clear-headed recent

statement of Harry Gamble: “It is undeniable, however, that irrespective of context, genre, or motive, pseudonymous writings are in their very nature deceptive, misleading the reader about the identity of the author.”[125] Recall the words of the greatest modern scholar of forgery, Wolfgang Speyer: “Each forgery feigns a state of affairs that does not correspond to actual events. In this vein, forgery belongs to the realm of lie and deceit.”[126]

Why then have scholars, especially New Testament commentators who have not looked at the broader phenomenon (and who, as a rule, do not cite any evidence), said otherwise? It is hard to escape the characteristically trenchant conclusion drawn by Anthony Grafton: “The only reason to assume that most earlier forgers were more innocent is our own desire to explain away a disquieting feature of the past.”[127]

Reasons for acknowledging that the overriding intention of forgers was to deceive their readers should be quite obvious from everything that has been said over the past two chapters. How else can we make sense of the motivations that drove forgers to produce their works in the first place, the techniques they used to avoid detection, and the reactions they incurred when detected? How else can we explain the pains that orthonymous authors took to assure their readers that their writings were authentic and the widespread exercise of criticism by scholars wanting to detect and declare which works were orthonymous and which spurious?

With respect to motives: if forgers could make money for the production of “authentic” writings of Euripides or Plato, who would pay if the works were known to be forged? If a forgery was used to authorize an oracle or some other religious institution, who would be persuaded if the authority did not write the authorization? If a forgery was produced as an apologia—for example of the Jewish or Christian religion on the pen of an ancient pagan prophetess—who would be convinced if it was known to be the work of a later author simply claiming to be someone he was not? If a forgery was produced in the name of a famous person in order to defame his character, as in the case of the fifty obscene letters forged by Diotimus in the name of Epicurus, how could they obtain their desired result if no one thought they were orthonymous? And on and on. None of the motivations for producing forgeries makes sense if they were transparent fictions. And so L. Donelson can categorically state: “No one ever seems to have accepted a document as religiously and philosophically prescriptive which was known to be forged. I do not know of a single example.”[128]

Moreover, if deceit were not involved, it is well nigh impossible to explain

the techniques forgers used in order to pass their work off as someone else's. Not only would the competent forger claim to be another person; he would also try to imitate the style of the person's writing and introduce verisimilitudes into the writing. He sometimes might include a discovery narrative to explain why the writing was not widely known before. He might warn his readers against those who forge writings in his name. He might introduce various prophylaxes into his account to assure his reader that it is genuine—seals, signs, acrostics, and the like. If he expected his reader to see through his ploy, why go to all the trouble? So too orthonymous writings tried to protect their integrity and to assure their readers by the same means. Why would this be necessary if forgeries were transparent? Why bother to protect what needs no protection?

And if no one was deceived, why are the reactions to forgers consistently negative and often harsh? Why do we have accounts of forgers being maligned, attacked, slurred, exiled, and murdered for their efforts—if no one was deceived and no one, frankly, cared? And why would ancient literary scholars need to go to all the bother of exposing forgeries and deciding for their readers which works circulating under an author's name were genuine and which were not, if no one was deceived?

All of the evidence points in the same direction. Forgers meant to deceive their readers. And they very often succeeded. So often did they succeed that in many instances—not just from early Christianity, but certainly at least from there—forgeries have not been detected until the modern period.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR FORGERY: THE NOBLE LIE

Forgery therefore involved literary deception. For nearly as long as there have been forgers there have been critics trying to expose forgeries, as we will see in greater detail shortly. Forgery was not an acceptable practice in the ancient world, any more than other forms of lying and deception were acceptable practices. Why then did forgers engage in their craft? Here I am not asking the question of motivation, which I have already addressed, but the question of self-justification. Forgers engaged in a culturally despised activity. Some of these forgers—as we can assume, for example, within much of the Christian tradition—were proponents of traditional moral values. So how did they explain to themselves what they did? This is a topic to which we will return at greater length at the end of our study, when we query specifically why the Christian forgers did what they did, or at least how they justified their actions to themselves.

The psychological question can never, of course, be answered in any definitive way, as we have no access to the inner mental and emotional processes of our anonymous forgers. We know very little about these people. Among other things, we do not even know their names, let alone anything concrete about them. Nonetheless, it may be worth our while to try to situate the activities of forgers in some kind of plausible psychological or, at least, philosophical context, if we are to make sense of the practice in a broader way.

It is much to be regretted that we have such scant traces of forgers' self-reportage.[129] Sometimes appeal is made to Tertullian's discussion of the Acts of Paul, produced by an unnamed presbyter of Asia Minor, who declared that he did it "for the love of Paul" (*De baptismo*, 17). Unfortunately, as we have seen, in this instance we are dealing not with a forgery but with the fabrication of a historical narrative (the author did not claim to be Paul). One author who did admit to producing pseudepigrapha—"Mithridates," who penned pseudonymous epistolary responses to Brutus from those to whom he had addressed letters—regrettably tells us nothing about how he understood what it was he was doing.

The one instance in which we have an ancient forger explain himself is the fifth-century Salvian of Marseille. As we have seen, Salvian refuses to admit guilt but states, as we have seen, that whereas readers should not assign authority to a mere name, he wrote in the name of Timothy because his own name carried no weight or authority. Salvian claims that he did nothing wrong: the "Timothy" named in the letter was not meant to be the apostolic companion of Paul but a pure pseudonym. He was writing "for the honor of God." This claim, as we have seen, stands in direct tension with Salvian's simultaneous insistence that for the book to be read it needed to be produced in the name of an authority. In any event, Salvian carefully avoids any admission of guilt, and if he refuses to acknowledge what he has done, then it is impossible for us to know how he justified it to himself. Possibly Salvian and most other forgers were so conflicted by what they were doing—deceiving others when they believed deceit was wrong—that they were unable even to explain to themselves why they did what they did.

There is no doubt, in any event, that the act of forgery was not just an act of deception but an active act of deception, involving a conscious literary lie. This is clearly recognized by Morton Smith, in his account of Jewish pseudepigrapha, where he states what should be—but regrettably is not always—obvious: even if a forger thought he had good reasons for doing what he did, "these considerations would not alter the fact that he knew he wrote the work, and he knew that the pretended author had not."[130]

In this connection it is important to stress again the difference between fiction and forgery. Antiquity had its own forms of writing that correspond roughly to our notion of fiction, and which were recognized as such, even if there continue to be debates among scholars about the nature of ancient fiction in relation to genres today.[131] But in a world of retold myths, epic poems, novels, and satires (cf. Lucian's "True Story") there was—even there—a tacit agreement between an author and a reader in which the requirement of factual reporting was suspended. As Michael Wood helpfully indicates, "Fiction is pure invention, any sort of fabrication. It is invention which knows it is invention; or which knows *and says* it is invention; or which, whatever it knows and says, *is known* to be invention."[132] The reports of forgery, on the other hand, consistently show that there was no agreement between author and reader for the assumption of a false name.[133]

There is no need for me at this stage to provide a lengthy evaluation of the ancient discourses on lying and deceit.[134] This is a matter to which I will return at the conclusion of our study. Suffice it to say, at this stage, that there was not one opinion about what lying was and under what circumstances it was acceptable. When Augustine wrote his two famous treatises on lying—the two most famous discussions from all of Christian antiquity—he staked out clear and precise positions both on what constituted a lie (a fissure between thought and utterance that is evident to the speaker in an act of speaking undertaken precisely with the intent of creating the fissure) and when telling a lie was admissible (never, under any circumstances whatsoever). But it is important to recall, with Paul Griffiths, the most compelling commentator on Augustine's position, that especially with respect to the latter point, "Few Christians agreed with him when he wrote."[135]

On the contrary there was a widespread notion among thinkers from Socrates to Chrysostom—that is, throughout the entire period of our concern, and considerably prior—that lying was in some circumstances acceptable and not, necessarily, morally condemned. As Jane Zembaty has stated in a study of Plato's Republic, lying or deception was sometimes "justified by more important moral considerations."[136] Plato is known to have advocated the moral justification of lying to one's enemies, and more significant, to have proposed the "noble lie," reserved for the protectors of the state in his Republic, who needed to deceive their subjects in order to promote the greatest possible good. These notions did not originate with Plato, however; Socrates before him, for example, maintained that there were occasions in which lying was both necessary and useful, as when a field general needed to lie to his disheartened

troops that reinforcements were near in order to spur them to more valiant efforts, or when a doctor needed to deceive a child in order to convince him to take medication that was good for him. Or so, at least, Xenophon reports in the *Memorabilia* (4, 2, 15–18).

Aristotle agreed with Plato, in Paul Griffiths' words, "damning some lies, excusing others, and recommending yet others (though they did not agree on which lies belong to which category)."[137] Sextus Empiricus showed that later Stoics accepted Plato's view (*Adv. Mathematicos*), and by our period the idea had become a commonplace, as seen in its reappearance, in appropriately modified forms, in such widely disparate sources as Quintilian ("Is not this another case where the orator will not shrink even from lies, if so he may save one who is not merely innocent, but a praiseworthy citizen?")[138] and Heliodorus ("For lying is good whenever it benefits those who speak but does no harm to those who hear").[139]

Christian authors could and did appeal to numerous instances from Scripture itself in order to justify their own practices of lying and deception (as Augustine notes, disapprovingly): the midwives of Exodus 1:15–22, who protected the Hebrew babies from the unjust wrath of Pharaoh; Abraham and Isaac, who saved their own skins, and the posterity of Israel, by lying about their wives (e.g., Genesis 22); Rahab, who lied about the spies in Joshua 2; Michal, whose deception in 1 Samuel 19:11–18 saved David, the father of the future messiah; Jonathan, who lied to protect him a chapter later; and Jesus himself, who declared he was not going to Jerusalem in John 7, knowing full well that he was; and after his resurrection when he deceived his two followers on the road to Emmaus by assuming a false appearance in Luke 24. Even God is said to have employed deception in Scripture, most famously in Jeremiah's lament, "O Lord, you have deceived me and I have been deceived" (Jer. 20:7).

We do not know, of course, what explanations or excuses forgers made to themselves when they engaged in their acts of conscious deception. But it has plausibly been argued by such scholars as Norbert Brox and Armin Baum that these authors—some of them? most of them?—subscribed to the secular and biblical idea of the "noble lie"—that it was better in some circumstances to practice deception so that a greater good might result. As Brox stresses:

> Notions that those kinds of deceptions, lies, and tricks carried out for the sake of truth and for the effective communication of truth, were expressly permitted were widespread, even if other contemporaries held different views.… Thus we cannot continue to say that all forgers

> (including Christian ones) must have forged with a troubled conscience.[140]

It is important not to miss the caveat, which cannot be worded strongly enough: "even if other contemporaries held different views." We do not have any evidence of any Christian forger being welcomed and supported for his attempt to achieve a greater good through an act of deception. Some Christians may indeed have approved such practices, just as other Christians may have approved of lying under oath, stealing, armed rebellion, and murder, if the circumstances required it.

In any event, it is not at all implausible that forgers themselves may have excused their activities to themselves on the ground that they were accomplishing more good than evil in lying about their identity in order to have their point of view heard. One can easily imagine a situation where later followers of Paul, Peter, James, Thomas, or any of the other apostles may have thought that by producing a writing in the name of their teachers—even if several generations or centuries removed—they could deal more effectively with a problem that had arisen or with a situation that had to be addressed. They may well have thought that their writing was very much what their teacher would have said, had he been alive at the time to say it.

But the reality is that other persons with alternative points of view—even precisely the opposite points of view—may well have thought the same things about their own lies and deceits. In either instance the forger may have felt that he engaged in a noble lie and that he was justified in claiming to be someone other than he was. His opponents—conceivably, other forgers—would have felt quite differently, and would have called him a liar and would have labeled his work a νόθα. It is not just that the contents of the works were false; the author himself had tried to deceive his readers about his identity.

CRITERIA OF DETECTION

Throughout these opening chapters we have seen a steady stream of ancient witnesses to a consistent attitude toward forgery. Ancient critics were concerned to know the names and identities of the actual authors of texts; if a writing was suspected of being pseudepigraphic, there was an active interest in knowing who the real author was.[141] In no small measure, this was because of a widely unspoken assumption that the authority of a text resides in the person of the author. At the same time, the identity of the authorizing author was determined

to some extent by the details of the text, so that a symbiotic relation existed between text and author: the author authorized the contents of the text, but the contents of the text established the identity of the author.

In an insightful study that effortlessly ranges from antiquity to early modernity, Anthony Grafton has shown that over the centuries the art of forgery grew and changed in relationship to the practice of criticism: the better critics became at determining forgery, the more skilled forgers became, by necessity, in hiding the traces of their deceit. As forgers improved their craft, critics further honed their skills, leading forgers to improve yet further.[142] This escalating scale of deceit and detection does not mean that the essential character of criticism changed over the centuries; as it turns out, the ancients used many of the same methods and appealed to many of the same criteria that critics use today.

Some form of Echtheitskritik goes back at least as far as Herodotus.[143] To be sure, as might be expected, in antiquity, as today, there was considerable gullibility on all sorts of matters, as sometimes lamented by the highly educated elite, such as Pliny the Elder: “It is astounding to what lengths Greek credulity (credulitas) will go; there is no lie (mendacium) so shameless as to lack a supporter.”[144] And we have already seen what a modern critic has said about ancient credulity: “an uncritical approach to literature and gullibility of every kind were widespread. The history of literary gullibility has yet to be written.”[145] Still, criticism was widely practiced, at least in the rarified atmosphere of the cultural elite. The following were among the criteria explicitly invoked in deciding whether a work was γνήσιος or ψεῦδος.

Style

First and foremost was the matter of literary style. We have already seen Galen’s heartfelt approbation of the unnamed amateur critic who uncovered a forgery in Galen’s own name simply by perusing the first two lines: οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ λέξις αὕτη Γαλήνου: “this is not the style of Galen.” Galen himself was a master of style, and used stylistic considerations to great effect in his massive effort to establish the authentic Hippocratic corpus and to uncover the pseudepigraphic works within it. Just on the Hippocratic *On the Nature of Man*, for example, he is able to show that parts of the work, at least, could not have been forged at the time of the construction of the great Hellenistic libraries—invoking a different criterion—because they are quoted already by Plato, whereas other portions are of more recent vintage: “Those words must come from recent doctors who did not know the ancient style.”[146]

The appeal to style was no Galenic invention. Two centuries earlier stylistic criteria were used to good effect by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. His essay on Dinarchus, the late-fourth-century Athenian orator, is nothing but a discussion of which speeches are genuinely his (γνήσιοι) and which are false, ψεῦδοι or ψευδεπίγραφοι. The grounds he appeals to time and again are stylistic: περὶ τοῦ χαρακτῆρος (ch. 5). Moreover, Dionysius claims that the same criterion can be applied to the works of Plato, Thucydides, Isocrates, or Demosthenes. Each author has a characteristic style, and Dionysius explains in rough form what it is. He then gives reasons for rejecting speeches that he considers "spurious" (ψεῦδοι). Elsewhere, in his evaluation of the writings of Lysias, he argues that the speech about the statue of Iphicrates is "devoid of charm and does not at all display the eloquence of Lysias."

So too Aulus Gellius, in the second century CE, weighed in on the question of the 130 comedies ascribed to Plautus. Noting that Varro had argued, largely on stylistic grounds, that only 21 of the plays were Plautan, Gellius himself considered that several more should be accepted, since they manifested "the characteristic features of his manner and diction" (*Noctes atticae* 3.3). So too Philostratus attacks those who ascribe *Araspes the Lover of Panthea* to Dionysius of Miletus, the great rhetor, indicating that they "are ignorant not only of his rhythms but of his whole style of eloquence, moreover they know nothing of the art of ratiocination."[147] The work instead was written by Celer, "the writer on rhetoric" who was in fact unfriendly with Dionysius from their youth onward, and "was not skilled in declamation" (*Lives of the Sophists* 1.22). So too in his *Life of Apollonius*, (7, 35) he indicates that the enemies of his protagonist had forged a letter (τινα ἐπιστολὴν ἀνέπλασαν) in his name, in which it was stated that Apollonius supplicated Domitian on his knees to be released from his bonds. Philostratus had no difficulty exposing the forgery: "Certainly Apollonius wrote his own will in Ionic; but a letter of his in that dialect I have never come across, though I have made a large collection of them, and I never observed verbosity in one of the Master's letters, since they are all brief and telegraphic."[148]

We have already seen that the educated elite among the early Christians were also adept at establishing authorship on the basis of considerations of style. Origen, for example, recognized that Hebrews could not have been written by Paul (Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.25); his contemporary Dionysius of Alexandria showed that the book of Revelation was not authored by the fourth Evangelist (Eusebius, *H.E.* 7.25); Jerome pointed out that his predecessors had called into question 2 Peter because of its stylistic differences from 1 Peter (*Vir. ill.* 1); so too he could argue that Theophilus of Antioch was not the author of certain biblical

commentaries circulating in his name because they “ascribed to his authorship, which do not seem to me to match the elegance and style of the previous volumes” (*Vir. ill*. 25).

Anachronisms and Other Historical Problems

In addition to stylistic variations, ancient critics were keen to detect anachronisms and other historical problems that made it impossible for texts to have been written by their alleged authors. Returning to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, and his criticism of the speech of Lysias about the statue of Iphicrates: not only does the speech differ stylistically from Lysias’ other works, but the statue that it praises was not commissioned until seven years after the orator’s death. Another speech in praise of Iphicrates defends its subject’s actions during the War of the Allies, which occurred twenty years after Lysias had died. Dionysius argues on stylistic grounds that both speeches had been placed on the lips of Lysias by none other than Iphicrates himself (*Lysias* 12).

Somewhat later, Pliny the Elder speaks of a papyrus letter on display in a temple of Lycia which was allegedly written by Sarpedon during the Trojan war. Pliny objects on the grounds that the manufacture of papyrus in Egypt had not yet begun by the time of Homer (let alone Sarpedon), that in fact Egypt itself did not even exist yet. Since letters at the time were written on leaden tablets and linen cloths, the book cannot be authentic (*Natural History* 13, 88). So too Diogenes Laertius, citing Favorinus’ *Memorabilia*, indicates that a speech of Polycrates against Socrates cannot be authentic (μὴ εἶναι ἀληθῆ τὸν λόγον) since it mentions the rebuilding of the walls by Conon, which did not take place until some years after the death of Socrates (*Lives* 2.39).

At other times anachronisms took place on the level of historical linguistics. From Jerome’s Prologue to his commentary on Daniel we learn that the enemy of the Christians, Porphyry, argued that the book of Daniel was a forgery that did not belong to the Hebrew Scriptures but was originally composed in Greek. This he deduced from the fact (which he had possibly picked up from Julius Africanus, who used it against Origen) that in the story of Susanna, Daniel uses the clever phrasing ἀπὸ τοῦ σχίνου σχίσαι . . . ἀπὸ τοῦ πρίνου πρίσαι “splitting the mastic tree … sawing the evergreen oak.” This kind of alliterative pun obviously works in Greek but not in Hebrew. The book therefore does not go back to a Hebrew prophet of the sixth century BCE, but was composed in his name by a forger living in Hellenistic times.

Christian authors too were concerned with anachronisms and historical problems that called into question the authenticity of writings, both those they cherished and those written to oppose them. As mentioned, Tertullian was compelled to engage in a rather elaborate set of mental gymnastics to explain how Enoch could have written the popular apocalypse circulating in his name, given the circumstance that any such book must have perished in Noah's flood (*De cultu Fem*. 1, 3). Eusebius shows that the pagan Acts of Pilate in circulation during the reign of Maximin Daia could not be authentic, since it places the crucifixion of Jesus in the fourth consulship of Tiberius—that is, in his seventh year, whereas Pilate was not made governor of Judea, according to Josephus, until Tiberius' twelfth year (*H.E*. 1.9). So too, as we have seen, Augustine had no difficulty exposing a letter allegedly written by Jesus to his disciples Peter and Paul, on the ground that Paul was not a follower of Jesus during his earthly ministry (*De cons. evang*. 1, 10).

Internal Inconsistencies and Implausibilities

At other times pseudepigraphic writings were suspect because they contradicted the statements found in orthonymous works of the same author or contained other kinds of implausibilities. Herodotus, for example, doubted the Homeric authorship of the Cyprian poems because their account of the travels of Helen contradicted what was said in the Iliad and the Odyssey (2.117). At the end of our period Augustine cited inconsistencies between the claims of Pelagius made on trial with writings that allegedly were produced by him years earlier, arguing that the books were likely forgeries in his name produced by others (*De Gest. Pelag*. 1. 19). And as he states with reference to one of his other nemeses, Faustus:

> But even in worldly writings there were well-known authors under whose names many works were produced later, and they were repudiated either because they did not agree with the writings that were certainly theirs or because, at the time when those authors wrote, these writings did not merit to be recognized and to be handed on and commended to posterity by them or their friends. (*Contra faust*. 33.6)

Faustus himself claimed that it was completely implausible that the Gospel of Matthew was written by Matthew the tax collector, given the story of the call of Matthew in chapter 9, which is narrated in the third person:

> Hence, for the present we have allowed ourselves to do an injustice to Matthew until we prove that he did not write this but that someone else wrote it under his name. The indirect form of the same passage of Matthew teaches us this. After all, what does he say? “And when Jesus was passing by, he saw a man sitting at a tax collector’s station by the name of Matthew, and he called him. But Matthew immediately got up and followed him.” (Matt. 9:9) Who, then, when writing about himself, would say, “He saw a man sitting at a tax collector’s station, and he called him, and he followed him,” and would not rather say, “He saw me, and he called me, and I followed him.” The only explanation is that Matthew did not write this but that someone else wrote it under his name. Even if Matthew wrote this, then, it would not be true, since he was not present when Jesus said this on the mountain. For how much better reason ought we not to believe this, given that Matthew did not write it but that someone else wrote it under the names of Jesus and Matthew? (17.1)

From the Roman world we have the *Apology* of Apuleius, which, as we have seen, mentions the work of his accusers who produced a “forged letter by which they attempted to prove that I beguiled Pudentilla with flattery. I never wrote it and the forgery is not even plausible” (*Apol*. 87). For one thing, his accusers charge him with using magic to entrance the rich widow: But if he used magic, why would he have needed to write a flattering letter? And how would they have obtained such a letter, which necessarily would have been private, not published?

In addition to these sundry criteria of detection used by a range of critics in antiquity, there were two that appear to be distinctively Christian, driven, at least in part, by theological views that characterized the orthodox understanding of the faith.[149]

Theological Sachkritik

In some early Christian discussions of authenticity there appears a critical logic that might appear peculiar to an outsider observer. The logic is founded on the idea that regnant orthodox views were rooted in the beliefs and preaching of the apostles of Jesus. Any writing that presents contrary positions could not, then, have been written by the apostles.

On one hand, this view is related to criteria mentioned earlier in which anachronisms and implausibilities can demonstrate a work's inauthenticity. Authorship was judged, in part, on contents. But this kind of *Sachkritik* is now given a theological edge. Writings out of line with orthodox Christian thinking cannot be associated with authors who stand at the foundation of the orthodox church. The circularity of the logic may seem all too patent to outsiders: orthodox Christians may have claimed the apostles as their theological forebears, but the historical figures of the apostles themselves were not so easily tamed. Multiple groups of Christians in, say, the second, third, and fourth centuries could all aver apostolic support for their views. In fact, all the groups of Christians that we know about did so, even when their views were diametrically opposed to one another. For one group to judge the authenticity of a writing based on its own set of theological perspectives is simply another way to contend that the apostles "are ours, not yours."

In any event, this kind of theological Sachkritik did occur on occasion, never more forthrightly than in the famous incident involving Serapion and the Gospel of Peter, already recounted.[150] Serapion forbade the future use of the book because of its occasional "docetic" affirmations. For him, the logic was inexorable. If parts of the book supported a theological perspective that he and his co-religionists found offensive or dangerous, then obviously they could not have originated from the pen of one of Jesus' earthly followers. Unlike the other criteria we have considered, this one is deeply rooted in heresiological concerns. It is theology, not history. Or at least it is theologically driven history.

Eusebius records a comparable debate over the book of Revelation. Some "orthodox" critics had charged that the book could not be by John, or even by a member of the true church, because it supported a sensualist vision of the future kingdom of God, involving "unlimited indulgence in gluttony and lechery at banquets, drinking bouts, and wedding feasts." Their conclusion: the book must have been forged in John's name by a heretic, most likely that nefarious opponent of orthodoxy, Cerinthus (*H.E.* 7.25). In less vitriolic terms Jerome indicates that some of his orthodox colleagues reject the book of Jude because it quotes the apocryphal book of Enoch, something no orthodox writer, obviously, would do (*Vir. ill*. 4).

A comparable logic drives Rufinus to explain how "orthodox" books could contain statements that do not toe the theological line:

> For it is shown in the case of saintly men of old and of those already judged to have been Catholics … that if anything is found in *their* works

> contrary to the faith of the Church, it should be thought to have been inserted by heretics rather than to have been written by the authors themselves. (*De adult. lib. Orig.*, 8)[151]

Established Patterns of Usage

The second distinctively Christian form of criticism also has analogues in the Greek and Roman worlds. We have seen that discovery narratives were adduced in large measure in order to explain why a work of such importance was not previously known. It had been hidden. Behind the ploy lies a concern of criticism: writings should have an established lineage to be accepted as authentic, rather than appearing just recently.[152]

Christians took this criterion to a new level, in no small measure because it related closely to another cherished notion, that the validity of a doctrine, practice, or policy was closely tied to its apostolic connections, and that lines of succession for all things orthodox could be traced directly back to the apostles of Jesus themselves. With few exceptions, orthodox Christians maintained that their beliefs represented the earliest forms of the tradition, and that false beliefs were later corruptions of the “original” teachings of the apostles. Clear lines of descent could be traced for both true and false positions.

This idea of succession morphed into an arbiter of literary authenticity, already by the time of Tertullian:

> These are the sort of summary arguments I use when skirmishing light-armed against heretics on behalf of the faith of the gospel, arguments which claim the support of that succession of times which pleads the previous question against the late emergence of falsifiers, as well as that authority of the churches which gives expert witness to the tradition of the apostles: because the truth must of necessity precede the false, and proceed from those from whom its tradition began. (*Adv. Marc*. 4, 5)

By the time of Eusebius the principle had solidified into a criterion. Christian—especially canonical—books are judged authentic largely on the basis of established usage among the orthodox Christian churches. Books that cannot trace a long lineage of use in such circles are suspect. And so, for example, in deciding which of Peter’s writings were to be accepted as authoritative, Eusebius indicates that 1 Peter is genuine because it is quoted extensively in the writings of the early church fathers. 2 Peter was not widely known however, although

some have found it worthy of a place in Scripture. But the Acts of Peter, the Gospel of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, and the Apocalypse of Peter—all attributed to him—are not to be accepted because they were not used by church writers of early days or in Eusebius's own day (*H.E.*3.3).

One might suspect that Eusebius here is concerned only with the question of canonicity, not of authenticity. But these two issues are indelibly linked for him, in no small measure because any writing by the apostle Peter would naturally need to be considered a scriptural authority. This connection is implied throughout his discussion, as when he summarizes his findings in terms of authorship: "These then are the works attributed to Peter, of which I have recognized only one epistle as authentic and accepted by the early fathers" (ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ὀνομαζόμενα Πέτρου, ὧν μόνην μίαν γνησίαν ἔγνων ἐπιστολὴν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς πάλαι πρεσβυτέροις ὡμολογημένην. Note again γνησίαν; 3.3.4). Elsewhere, on some such grounds, Eusebius can dispute the authenticity of James and Jude, considered νόθα precisely because they are not widely mentioned by "ancient" Christian writers (2.23). So too for patently noncanonical books. 2 Clement is not a work of Clement precisely because it is not widely attested in earlier sources; nor are the dialogues of Peter and Apion written in his name since "there is no mention whatever of them by early writers" (3.38).

Augustine in particular stresses both the secular and theological logic of this criterion, in a statement worth quoting at length:

> Were not certain books that were produced under the name Hippocrates, the highly renowned physician, rejected as authoritative by physicians? Nor did a certain similarity of topics and language offer them any help. For, compared to the books that it was clear were really Hippocrates' books, they were judged inferior, and they were not known at the same time at which the rest of his writings were recognized as truly his. But how is it proven that these books are really his when, compared to them, the books brought forth out of the blue are rejected? How is it proven so that, if anyone rejects this, he is not even refuted but laughed at, except because a series of physicians, from the time of Hippocrates down to the present time and thereafter, has commended them so that to have any doubt about them is the mark of a madman? How do people know that the books of Plato, Aristotle, Varro, Cicero, and other such authors are their works except by the same unbroken testimony of the ages following one upon another?

> Many authors have written extensively on the Church's writings, not, of course, with canonical authority but with some desire to be helpful or to learn. How is it determined who wrote what except by the fact that, in the times in which each author wrote them, he made them known and published them for those for whom he could, and from them they were passed on to future generations, one after another, with unbroken knowledge that was quite widely accepted, down to our times, so that, when asked whose book is whose, we do not hesitate what we ought to reply? … Since that is the case, who, then, is blinded by such great madness—unless he has been corrupted by agreeing with the wickedness and fallacies of lying demons—as to say that the Church of the apostles, so faithful and so numerous a harmony of brothers, could not have merited faithfully to transmit their writings to future generations, though the sees of the apostles have been preserved down to the present bishops in an utterly certain line of succession, especially since this is so much the case with any people's writings, whether outside the Church or even in the Church? (*Contra Faust*. 33.6)

The continuous attestation of books from the time of their author gives evidence of their authenticity, even in the case of secular writings. But that is even more the case with Christian writings, transmitted by faithful believers, unaltered over the years, in a way analogous to the famed apostolic succession, in which bishops can trace their lineage through their predecessors back to the apostles of Jesus themselves. With the Christian writings this is not just a matter of historical accident; it is an act of providence.

1. "Der Verzicht auf ein Herausarbeiten der Absichten der Fälscher wäre gleichbedeutend mit dem Verzicht, die Fälschungen zu verstehen. Nur das Motiv erklärt die Fälschung." *Die literarische Fälschung*, p. 9.

2. We have only one writing from our period in which a forger admits to what he did, the letter of "Mithridates" that indicates why he produced pseudepigraphic responses by the addressees of the letters of Brutus (assuming, with Calhoun, that this letter is not itself pseudepigraphic). Unfortunately Mithridates does not explain his motivation. See Robert Matthew Calhoun, "The Letter of Mithridates: A Neglected Item of Ancient Epistolary Theory," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 295–330.

3. On the theoretical problem of establishing authorial intentions—which I am here differentiating from "motives," although obviously some of the hypothetical issues are the same—see p. 30, n. 32.

4. For the works of Salvian, see the edition in the *Sources Chrétienne*, 176, 220. The first English translation of *ad Ecclesiam*, with introduction, was published by A. Haefner, “A Unique Source for the Study of Ancient Pseudonymity,” *AThR* 16 (1934): 8–15.

5. I am using the translation of Haefner, “Unique Source”; see also Jeremiah F. O’Sullivan, tr., *The Writings of Salvian, The Presbyter* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1947).

6. See the list of Gennadius, *Catalogus virorum illustrium*, 68, cited by O’Sullivan, *The Writings of Salvian*, pp. 5–6.

7. E.g., Norbert Brox, “Quis ille auctor? Pseudonymität und Anonymität bei Salvian,” *VC* 40 (1986): 55–65.

8. Ibid.

9. For the following objections, see David Lambert, “*The Pseudonymity of Salvian’s Timothy ad Ecclesiam,” StPatr* 38, ed. Maurice Wiles *et al.* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 422–28.

10. Ibid.

11. On intention, see p. 30, n. 3.

12. J. C. Fenton, “Pseudonymity in the New Testament,” *Theology* 58 (1955): 55.

13. See, e.g., *In Hippocratis de natura hominis commentarium*, Book 2, Proem.

14. *In Hipp. De nat. hom. Comm*. 1. 44, the fuller passage is conveniently quoted in Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 224.

15. *In Hipp. De nat. hom*, *Comm*. 2 pr. See Ann Ellis Hanson, “Galen: Author and Critic,” in Glenn W. Most, ed., *Editing Texts, Texte edieren* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 22–53, esp. p. 33.

16. *Mistaken Critic*, 30; translation of A. M. Harmon, *Lucian*, vol. 5; LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

17. Olympiodorus, *Prolegomena;* for text, see Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 238–41.

18. See Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 112, 333; C. W. Müller, “Die neuplatonischen Aristoteleskommentatoren über die Ursachen der Pseudepigraphie,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 112 (1969): 120–26.

19. “Literary Frauds Among the Greeks,” pp. 52–74.

20. Suetonius, *Galba*, 9.2

21. Plutarch, *Alexander*, 17.2 (who does not label it a forgery).

22. *Life of Julius*, 81; translation of J. C. Rolfe *Suetonius*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1951). See Wolfgang Speyer, *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike. Mit einem Ausblick auf Mittelalter und Neuzeit*

(Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), pp. 71–72.

3. *Life of Augustus* 51; translation of Rolfe in the Loeb.

4. *War* 1.26.3. For a further example involving Antipater, see *War* 1.32.6.

5. See the discussion on p. 66.

6. Among the significant studies, see esp. H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity*, ed. by B. C. McGing (London: Routledge, 1988); and John J. Collins, “The Development of the Sibylline Tradition,” *ANRW* II. 20 (1987): 421–59. Useful translations are available in Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., OTP (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), vol. 1, pp. 317–472.

7. See further pp. 508–19.

8. For a full study of the patristic attestations, see the now classic study of Bard Thompson, “Patristic Use of the Sibylline Oracles,” *RR* 16 (1952): 115–36.

9. *Contra Celsum* 7.56; Translation of Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953).

0. Actually the dates do not work; this must be Onias I (*Ant*. 12, 226f.). Josephus does not call the letter forged.

1. See esp. the discussion of Alfons Fürst et al., *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Paulus*, SAPERE XI (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

2. For an alternative explanation, that the correspondence is merely a rhetorical exercise from a Christian school, see above, p. 45, n. 35. For fuller discussion see pp. 520–27.

3. For an English translation of the correspondence, see Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 413–17.

4. Of even greater importance, as Maria Doerfler has reminded me: the letter serves to elevate the status of the Christian community in Edessa by connecting it directly to the earthly Jesus himself. See the study of the later *Doctrina* in Sidney Griffiths, “The *Doctrina Addai* as a Paradigm of Christian Thought in Edessa in the Fifth Century,” *Hugoye* 6.2 (2003).

5. For translations see Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 419–557.

6. Some have argued that the imperial rescripts designed to curtail and regulate the persecutions of Christians are best seen as apologetically driven forgeries by Christians (see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 252–55). More recent scholars have found grounds for taking many of the rescripts as authentic. See Denis Minns, “The Rescript of Hadrian,” in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, eds., *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), pp. 38–49; and Paul Keresztes, “The Emperor Antoninus Pius and the Christians,” *JEH* 22

(1971): 1–18.

7. Translation of W. H. S. Jones, *Pausanias: Description of Greece*. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1918).

8. *Lives* 10, 8; translation of R. D. Hicks *Diogenes Laertius*.

9. *De natura deorum* 1.33; see also Sextus Empiricus, 599; Athenaeus, *Banq*. 8.354.

0. W. Crönert, *Kolotes und Menedemos* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1965), pp. 16–24.

1. Translations of Martial are from Walter C. A. Ker, *Martial: Epigrams* LCL, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1968).

2. See also 7.72, quoted on p. 81.

3. Translation of Vincent Hunink in Stephen Harris et al., *Apuleius: Rhetorical Works* (New York: Oxford University, 2001), p. 105.

4. *Life of Apollonius*, 7.35. Translation of F. C. Conybeare, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1912).

5. *Adv. Rufin*. 2.24.

6. "Fälschungen galten als literarische Kampfmittel und wurden mit Gegenfälschungen beantwortet." "Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie im Urchristentum: Überlegungen zum literarischen und theologischen Problem der urchristlichen und gemeinantiken Pseudepigraphie," *ZTK* 66 (1969): 409.

7. *Lives* 2, 42.

8. See the discussions on pp. 350–58 and 439–45.

9. "Pseudonymity and the New Testament Canon," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 359.

0. Margaret MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 8.

1. *Colossians* AB 34B (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. 123.

2. "Die Schüler brachten ja mehr oder weniger die Gedanken ihres Lehrers in schriftliche Form, während große Schulhäupter oftmals nur mündlich lehrten. Durch die Verfasserangabe wurde damit der geistige Autor benannt, auf den der Inhalt des Werkes letztlich zurückging. Eine solche Zuschreibung wurde vom antiken Menschen wohl nicht als Fälschung empfunden." *Das Vermächtnis des Apostels: Die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie im Epheserbrief*, WUNT 2; 99 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), p. 9. For another recent representative of the view, see Angela Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

3. The most recent example of a scholar who presents the view

nonproblematically is Richard Pervo, in his otherwise interesting *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), pp. 6–10.

4. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 51–57; Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben*, pp. 71–75. It appears even in studies of Pythagoras himself. Thus David R. Fideler, “Introduction,” in *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library: An Anthology of Ancient Writings Which Relate to Pythagoras and Pythagorean Philosophy*, compiled and translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1987):

> These writings are attributed to original members of the Pythagorean school which in fact is actually not the case [i.e., they did not actually write them]. This does not mean that these writings are “forgeries” in the modern sense of the word, for it was a fairly common practice in antiquity to publish writings as pseudepigrapha, attributing them to earlier, more renowned individuals. It was probably out of reverence for their master—and also perhaps because they were discussing authoritative school traditions—that certain Pythagoreans who published writings attributed them directly to Pythagoras himself.

It is worth noting that, as with most New Testament scholars, Fideler does not mention any ancient reflections on the phenomenon that have led him to his conclusion, and cites not a single piece of evidence for it.

5. *Epistle* 33, 4. Translation of R. M. Gummere in LCL, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1917–1925).

6. Translation Rolfe in LCL.

7. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 53.

8. “Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie,” in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*, ed. Jörg Frey et al., p. 177.

9. Unless he is referring to the Hellenistic revitalization of the school, on which see p. 111.

0. Ed. ‘Amir al-Najjar (4 vols., Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Misriyya al-’Amma lil-Kitab, 2001), vol. 1, pp. 244–45.

1. “Die Schriften und Fragmente des Pythagoras,” *RESupp*. 10 (1965): 843–64; see also idem, *Die Pythagoreer. Religiöse Bruderschaft und Schule der Wissenschaft* (Zurich: Artemis, 1979), 272–73.

2. See Holger Thesleff, *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the*

Hellenistic Period (Åbo: Åbo Academi, 1961). For collection of these texts see Kenneth Guthrie and Thomas Taylor, *The Pythagorean Writings: Hellenistic Texts from the 1st Cent.* B.C.*–3d Cent.* A.D., ed. Robert Navon (Kew Gardens, NY: Selene Books, 1986).

3. *Life of Pythagoras* 29. Translation mine.

4. Ch. 31; translation of John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell, *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), p. 203. The translators themselves point out that whereas the claim may have made sense in the early years of the Pythagorean movement (although even here there are questions), "it hardly makes much sense subsequent to the publication of the pseudo-Pythagorean writings." One should press the question even harder: Does Iamblichus have any evidence (or rather is there any evidence) to support his claim? He certainly gives none. It looks instead to be his simple opinion of the matter.

5. Olympiodorus, *Prolegomena*, 13; for Greek text and German translation, see Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 238–43.

6. For example, by Mark Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 22–23.

7. "Der einzige (!), der von einer solchen Praxis berichtet, ist wiederum Jamblichos. Bis dahin hören wir von keinem konkreten Fall, in dem ein Pythagoreer seine Entdeckungen dem Pythagoras zugeschrieben hätte, und wir haben auch keinerlei Hinweis darauf, daß es in seiner Schule solche Tendenzen gibt." *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion im frühen Pythagoreismus* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), p. 91; exclamation point his.

8. See esp. Thesleff, *Introduction*.

9. "Anonymität und Pseudepigraphie," pp. 414–15; see also Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 139–42, and Duff, *Reconsideration*, p. 78.

0. See F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 275 T 11.

1. See Livy 40.29; Pliny *Natural History* 13.84–87; and Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, 8.19–20.

2. *Quintilian Inst. Proem. 7*. Translation of H.E. Butler, *Quintilian I*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1920).

3. Epictetus, *Discourses*. Translation of W. A. Oldfather in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1926).

4. On the practice of publishing a philosopher's lecture notes, cf. Angela Standhartinger: "From antiquity too we know that much of what was published in the name of famous men had actually been written down by their students, whether in the form of notes taken at the actual event or as memories thereof

after the fact. In the Pythagorean school and even more so in the Epicurean one, everything that was spoken or written by students counted as the intellectual property of the teacher and was frequently published under his name.” (“Es war also in der Antike bekannt, daß vieles von dem, was man unter dem Namen berühmter Männer lesen konnte, eigentlich von ihren Schülern und Schülerinnen aufgeschrieben worden war, sei es als Mitschrift, sei es als nachträgliche Erinnerung. In der pythagoräischen Schule und mehr noch in der epikureischen galt alles, was von den Schülerinnen und Schülern gesagt und aufgeschrieben wurde, als geistiges Eigentum des Lehrers und wurde unter dessen Namen an die Öffentlichkeit gebracht”; *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, p. 42). It is not clear where she derives her evidence that this was particularly common in Epicurean circles.

5. The classic study, very much still worth reading, is L. O. Bröcker, “Die Methoden Galens in der literarischen Kritik,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 40 (1885): 415–38. See as well A. Anastassiou and D. Irmer, eds., *Testimonien zum Corpus Hippocraticum*. pt. 2, *Galen; vol. 1 Hippokrateszitate in den Kommentaren und im Glossar* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1997). Scholars today, as both Dale Martin and Zlatko Pleše have reminded me, generally reject the authenticity of the entire Hippocratic corpus.

6. *In Hipp. Acut. Comment*. 2, 55; Anastassiou and Irmer, pp. 1–3.

7. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 58–59.

8. For example, Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 13.

9. *Adv. Marc*. 4.5.

0. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 60.

1. Peter Pilhofer, “Justin und das Petrusevangelium,” *ZNW* 81 (1990): 60–78; the attempted refutation by Thornton is far less persuasive; see Claus-Jürgen Thornton, “Justin und das Markusevangelium,” *ZNW* 84 (1993): 93–110.

2. See p. 62.

3. See p. 54.

4. *In Porphyr Isage*. Pr. 1: Translation mine; Greek text in Baum, *Pseudepigraphie*, p. 214

5. *Attic Nights* 10.12.8. Translation of John C. Rolfe, *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*. LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978–1984).

6. *Cons Evang*. 1.10.

7. See pp. 94–96.

8. *De adult libr. Orig. 2*. Scheck, *St. Pamphilus*, p. 125.

). *De adult libr. Orig. 12*. Scheck, *St. Pamphilus*, p. 133.

). Among many others, see, for example, Petr Pokorný, "Das theologische Problem der neutestamentlichen Pseudepigraphie," *EvT* 44 (1984): 486–96.

. My translation; see *The Apostolic Fathers*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2003).

!. The author of the Muratorian Fragment refuses to accept the Shepherd as canon in part because it was written by Hermes, the brother of the bishop of Rome, Pius; Origen (*Comm. In Matt* ser. 47, on Matt 24:23–28) indicates that the time of canonical writings was from the beginning of creation (Genesis) to the most recent writings of the Apostles "post quos nullis scripturis ita credendum est sicut illis" (see Baum *Pseudepigraphie*, pp. 154–55). Cf. Augustine: "But the books of later authors are distinct from the excellence of the canonical authority of the Old and New Testaments, which has been confirmed from the times of the apostles through the successions of bishops and through the spread of the churches. It has been set on high, as if on a kind of throne, and every believing and pious intellect should be obedient to it.… But in the works of later authors, which are found in countless books but are in no way equal to the most sacred excellence of the canonical scriptures, the same truth is also found in some of them, but their authority is far from equal" (*Contra Faust*. XI, 5).

}. "Die Geschichte der literarischen Leichtgläubigkeit ist noch nicht geschrieben." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 85.

|. Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2001), pp. 228–30.

;. See Robert Matthew Calhoun, "The Letter of Mithridates: A Neglected Item of Ancient Epistolary Theory," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 295–330. Calhoun summarizes the importance (yet neglect) of this letter in clear terms: "For scholars of the NT and early Christian literature the remarks of Mithridates on the production of pseudepigraphic letters should hold a comparable importance to what Thucydides has to say about the composition of speeches in historical narrative, since both directly address at a theoretical level phenomena that actually occur in Christian texts" (pp. 321–22). Among other things, Calhoun argues that the letter of Mithridates itself is not forged.

;. Translation of Calhoun, "The Letter," p. 303.

'. *BZ* 13 (1969): 76–94; reprinted in Brox, ed., *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdischchristlichen Antike*, pp. 272–94.

}. Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral*

Epistles (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1986), pp. 24–25.

). Ich-Rede und Augenzeugenschaft veranlassen den Hörer unmittelbar zu dem Glauben, daß der Erzähler das, was er berichtet, selbst erlebt hat.… Die Ich-Rede und die Augenzeugenschaft sind für die Wundererzählung und die Lügenerzählung geradezu kennzeichnend. Nicht weniger oft begegnet die Ich-Rede in Fälschungen, und meist ist sie hier mit der Angabe eines vorgetäuschten Verfassernamens verbunden. *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 51.

)0. Translation of R. M. Frazer, *The Trojan War: The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966).

)1. See Stefan Merkle, "The Truth and Nothing But the Truth: Dictys and Dares," in G. Schmeling, *The Novel in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 564–80.

)2. For translation, see Evan Sage and Alfred Schlesinger, *Livy History of Rome Book XL–XLII*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1938).

)3. Translation of J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

)4. See p. 99.

)5. Translation of William A. Falconer, *Cicero: De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1935).

)6. *On Divination*, 2.85.

)7. *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike*.

)8. Translation of James Donaldson in *ANF*, vol. 7.

)9. *Nero*, 17; translation of J. C. Rolfe, *Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1935).

.0. Translation of Wilfrid Parsons, *Augustine, Letters 1–82;* FC, vol. 12 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1951), p. 300.

.1. Translation of R. G. Bury, *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1929).

.2. *Roman Antiquities*, 4.62.6. Translation of Earnest Cary, in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1937–1950).

.3. On the theoretical problem of intent, see p. 30, n. 3.

.4. See p. 79.

.5. "Heiden, Juden und Christen haben sich derselben [schriftstellerischen Form] bedient, der eine mit größerer, der andere mit geringerer Gewandtheit, alle aber ohne den leisesten Skrupel zu empfinden; es schien dies ein bloßes Versteckspiel, bei dem man weder sich selbst noch anderen als wirklicher

Fälscher vorkam." J. Bernays, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* 1 (1885) p. 250, as cited in Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 5–6.

16. *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*, 1921, p. 12.

17. Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green, and Marianne M. Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament, Its Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 560.

18. See pp. 39–42.

19. "The Problem of Pseudonymity," in *The Living Word* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), p. 84.

20. *Jude, 2 Peter* WBC, 50 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), p. 134.

21. *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001), p. 57.

22. There is no need to provide an exhaustive list. Martina Janssen names the following as representative (from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries): B. Hegermann, E. Reinmuth, Gerd Theissen, B. S. Easton, H. J. Holtzmann, H.-J. Klauck. A. Vögtle, and others. See Janssen, *Unter falschem Namen*, pp. 182–85.

23. Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *JBL*, 91 (1972): 15–16.

24. "Das Grundproblem dieser Annahme einer offenen Pseudepigraphie im Urchristentum ist, dass weder in den Texten selbst irgendwelche Signale an die impliziten Leser zu finden sind, die ein Bewusstsein für diese postulierte Form der Rede erkennen lassen, noch in den sonstigen Quellen Hinweise für eine solche Einstellung auf Seiten der Rezipient Innen begegnen." *Die fiktive Selbstauslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), p. 198.

25. "Pseudonymity and NT Canon," p. 356.

26. "Jede Fälschung täuscht einen Sachverhalt vor, der den tatsächlichen Gegebenheiten nicht entspricht. Damit gehört die Fälschung in das Gebiet der Lüge und des Betruges." *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 3.

27. *Forgers and Critics*, p. 37.

28. P. 11.

29. See the informative discussion of Martina Janssen, "Antike (Selbst-)Aussagen über Beweggründe zur Pseudepigraphie," who, obviously, is more interested in the related question of self-described motivation.

30. "Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Tradition," in *Pseudepigrapha I: Pseudopythagorica, Lettres de Platon, Littérature pseudépigraphique juive*, ed.

Kurt von Fritz (Vandoeuvres-Génève: Fondation Hardt pour l'Étude de l'Antiquité Classique, 1972), pp. 206–7.

31. For an argument that nothing that corresponds to our sense of "fiction" existed in the ancient world, see Christopher Gill, "Plato on Falsehood–Not Fiction," in Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), pp. 38–87. For further discussion, see pp. 533–34.

32. "Prologue," in Gill and Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, p. xvi. Italics his.

33. Even if Gill were right about ancient "fiction" (see note 131), my characterization would apply. There were some kinds of discourse that were adopted and accepted widely in antiquity—even if they involved narratives and discourses that were not factually true (e.g., epic poems, Platonic Dialogues, historians' speeches, and the like)—because they (1) fulfilled a kind of contract between the author and reader to be what they were and not something else and (2) attempted to convey what was true: philosophical "truth," a "true" representation of what a speaker would have said, a "true" conveyor of a culture's heritage/tradition, *etc*. Lacking that implicit contract, a "forgery" was widely thought to violate cultural standards, even if the author was trying to convey something that in his view was "true" (e.g., how Paul would have responded if he were faced with Gnostic teachings). Moreover, his views were often rejected as "false" even if they were, in fact, "true" (i.e., the writing is rejected independently of the question of whether Paul really would have responded this way or not).

34. There is, naturally, a sizeable literature. In addition to the essays in Gill and Wiseman, *Lies and Fiction*, the following are among the most useful for understanding key aspects of the Christian tradition: Franz Schindler, "Die Lüge in der patristischen Literatur," *Beiträge zur Geschichte des christlichen Altertums und der byzantinischen Literatur* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1969; originally published 1922); Gregor Müller, *Die Wahrhaftigkeitspflicht und die Problematik der Lüge: Ein Längsschnitt durch die Moraltheologie und Ethik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Tugendlehre des Thomas von Aquin und der modernen Lösungsversuche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1962; among other things, Müller acknowledges that "several fathers of this era consider permissible the 'lie from necessity'" ["einige Väter dieser Epoche die 'Notlüge' für erlaubt halten"] and numbers among them Origen, Didymus, Chrysostom, Jon Cassian, Theodoret, and others); R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (Richmond:

John Knox, 1959; Hanson includes comments on divine deception, esp. in Origen's *Homilies* on Jeremiah; see XIX.15 and XX.3); Boniface Ramsey, "Two Traditions on Lying and Deception in the Ancient Church," *Thom*. 49 (1985): 504–33; David Satran, "Pedagogy and Deceit in the Alexandrian Theological Tradition," in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. R. J. Daly (1992), pp. 119–24 (dealing with Philo, Clement of Alexandria, Origen); and the articles in *JECS* 9 (2009). There is an extensive literature on Augustine in particular, all referred to and surpassed by Paul J. Griffiths, *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), a lucid, readable, intelligent, and helpful discussion, which embraces Augustine's view that consciously duplicitous speech acts are never acceptable, no matter what, as rooted in Augustine's understanding of the word in relationship to what it means to be human in relationship to God.

35. *Lying*, p. 14.

36. Jane S. Zembaty, "Plato's Republic and Greek Morality on Lying," *JHP* 26 (1988): 531.

37. *Lying*, p. 13.

38. *Institutio Oratio*, 12.1.41. Translation of H.E. Butler in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1929).

39. *Ethiopica*, 1.26.6. Translation mine.

40. "Es gab verbreitete Vorstellungen, nach denen um der Wahrheit und um der wirksamen Vermittlung der Wahrheit willen Täuschung, List und Tricks ausdrücklich gestattet waren, auch wenn andere Zeitgenossen anderer Meinung waren.… Man kann also nicht weiterhin sagen, daß alle Fälscher (auch die christlichen) schlechten Gewissens gefälscht haben müssen." *Falsche Verfasserangaben*, pp. 91–92. A comparable notion involves the "antidote" given to heal a disease, as pointed out, based on passages in Plato, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Jerome, by Petr Pokorný, "Das theologische Problem der neutestamentlichen Pseudepigraphie": "The authors of the canonical Christian pseudepigrapha apparently felt justified in their actions primarily by virtue of the notion of fighting fire with fire" (Die Verfasser der kanonisierten christlichen Pseudepigraphen fühlten sich in ihrem Vorgehen offensichtlich vor allem durch die Thesen von dem Gegengift gerechtfertigt).

41. For a relatively full discussion of the use of critical methods to uncover forgery in antiquity, see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 112–28.

42. *Forgers and Critics*, passim.

43. See the earlier discussion on pp. 61–62 and below p. 140.

44. *Natural History*, 8.82. Pliny, however, was not speaking of forgers but of

werewolves!

45. "… waren literarische Kritiklosigkeit und Leichtgläubigkeit jedweder Art weit verbreitet. Die Geschichte der literarischen Leichtgläubigkeit ist noch nicht geschrieben." Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 85.

46. See the discussion in Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, p. 19.

47. Translation of Wilmer Wright, *Philostratus*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1952).

48. Translation of Christopher P. Jones, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2005).

49. Speyer overstates the case when he claims: "Christian criticism was dogmatically determined. Their 'Echtheitskritik' (assessments of authenticity) worked almost exclusively with the terms 'orthodox' and 'heretical'" ("Die Kritik der Christen war also dogmatisch bestimmt. Ihre Echtheitskritik arbeitete so fast ausschließlich mit den Begriffen <Rechtgläubig> und <Häretisch>"; *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 201). There were, as we have seen, other criteria used as well. But he does have a point: much of what passed as criticism in early Christian circles was theologically driven.

50. See pp. 90–92.

51. Scheck, *St. Pamphilus*, p. 130.

52. Galen appealed to this criterion to establish that *De glandibus* was not actually a work of Hippocrates; none of the earlier physicians after the days of Hippocrates mentions it. See the discussion in Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 126.

PART II

Forgery in Early Christian Polemics

CHAPTER SIX

Introduction to Forgery and Counterforgery in Early Christian Polemics

As we turn now to the central focus of this study, the use of literary forgery in early Christian polemics, several points already mentioned need to be returned to prominence. The first and most obvious involves the extent of the phenomenon being considered.

The literary landscape of the first several Christian centuries is littered with falsely attributed and forged writings. Among the twenty-seven books that were later deemed Scripture, only eight are orthonymous; one of these, the book of Revelation, was admitted into the canon only because of a quirk of homonymy. The other seven all stem from the pen of one man. The remaining books are either falsely attributed to early authority figures within the church (the Gospels, Johannine epistles) or forged. A fair critical consensus holds that six of the Pauline letters and the letters of Peter were written by someone other than the apostles claimed as their authors, and that James and Jude were falsely inscribed in the names of Jesus' brothers. A good case can be made that Hebrews is a non-pseudepigraphic forgery, with the hints in the closing meant to indicate that it was written by Paul, even though his name is not attached to it. In what follows I will argue that Acts and 1 John are also best seen as non-pseudepigraphic forgeries, as they too make false authorial claims without naming a specific author.

Outside the New Testament false attributions continue, in such works as 1 Clement and Barnabas, pseudo-Justin *Cohortatio ad Graecos, De monarchia,* and *Oratio ad Graecos*, and pseudo-Tertullian *Adversus omnes haereses*. Forgeries of apocryphal works continue apace throughout the second and third centuries, and indeed on into and through the Middle Ages, with Gospels assigned to such figures as James, Thomas, Matthew, Philip, and Nicodemus, epistles allegedly written, again, by Paul (Laodiceans, Alexandrians, correspondence with Seneca) and Peter (epistula Petri), and apocalypses as well in the names of Peter and Paul. Starting in the third century, "church orders" begin to appear, not merely claiming to convey the teachings of the apostles, as with the Didache, but actually produced, falsely, in their names, as in the Didascalia Apostolorum and the Apostolic Constitutions. Eventually writings

appear in the names of subapostolic authorities, such as the pseudo-Ignatian letters and the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, as well as in the names of respected authorities from within the orthodox community, writings allegedly by Basil, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, many of them produced within the alleged authors' own lifetimes.

We are dealing with a large and complex phenomenon. In the analyses that follow I will be considering some fifty instances of forgery from the first four Christian centuries. How many were actually produced at the time is anyone's guess.

It will be difficult to make sweeping generalities about these forged productions as an undifferentiated group. They were written at different times, in different places, by different authors, for different purposes. But as I will be limiting myself to forgeries that appear to have been generated out of polemical interests, one feature does appear to bind them together. Their authors assumed false names for one chief end: to provide for their views an authority that otherwise would have proved difficult to obtain had they written anonymously or in their own names. These were authors in the throes of controversy, eager to establish their views as both legitimate and authorized. To that end they employed means widely regarded throughout their environment as illegitimate and unauthorized.

Throughout our period orthodox writers regularly and roundly accused heretics of forging documents. We find the charge in our earliest surviving heresiologist, Irenaeus, who, for example, accuses the Cainites of making use of a forged Gospel of Judas Iscariot; at about the same time the Muratorian Fragment denigrates as Marcionite forgeries the "Pauline" letters to the Laodiceans and Alexandrians; and again, from roughly the same time, Serapion of Antioch pronounces the Gospel of Peter pseudepigraphic. At the end of our period Epiphanius maligns numerous forgeries of the heretics, including the seven books of Seth and the Gospel of Eve, not to mention that lascivious Greater Questions of Mary, a book that, as I argued in Chapter One, may have been his very own invention, possibly a case of casting a stone in a glass house.

In some instances one finds warnings not to be led astray by forged documents precisely in documents that are themselves forged. The charge is found at the very beginning of our period in the canonical work of 2 Thessalonians, which warns its readers not to be misled by a letter allegedly—but not actually—written by Paul. At the end of our period it is found in the Apostolic Constitutions, which warns its readers, in the names of the earthly apostles of Jesus, not to read writings falsely produced in the names of the

earthly apostles of Jesus. All the Christian forgeries that warn readers to avoid forgeries are ultimately concerned with “false teachings,” in an environment when knowing the “truth” was essential for salvation. This, of course, is one of the disturbing ironies of the early Christian tradition, that those invested in establishing and promoting the truth often did so by lying—in this case by lying about their true identities. They appear to have done so in order to deceive their readers into believing that they were authority figures who could, by their elevated status, establish the contours of the true faith. In short, they promulgated a falsehood in order to promote their understanding of the truth.

Sometimes the forged attacks on “false” teachings appear more subtly, in the phenomenon I am calling “counterforgery.” To a certain extent every forgery that counters the views of another person, group, or writing is a counterforgery, and sometimes the term is used by scholars in this weaker sense. More poignantly, sometimes a forgery is used precisely to counter the views set forth in another work that is itself a forgery. It is in this stronger sense that I will predominantly be using the term here. It is not always the case that the forgery being opposed is recognized and named as a forgery—as does happen, however, in both 2 Thessalonians and the Apostolic Constitutions. More commonly it is impossible to know whether the forger realizes that the views under attack are in fact represented in a forged document; these, then, would be unwitting cases of fighting fire with fire.

Internecine conflicts were not the only polemical contexts within which the Christian writers of the first four centuries worked. Christians were embattled on several fronts at once; on the outside were the “unbelieving” Jews and the hostile pagans. Orthonymous writings of the so-called church Fathers attacked these Others and defended the true faith throughout the period; but so too did forged documents, believed by insiders to convey especial authority in view of their authorial claims. In many instances these forged attacks and apologiae served several purposes at once, intramural and extramural. And so it is important yet again to stress the potential multifunctionality of our surviving texts. Like many (most?) writings, Christian forgeries could and did serve a variety of purposes at one and the same time. The Coptic Gospel of Thomas polemicizes against apocalyptic expectations of other Christian teachers, against Judaism and Judaizing, and against theologies that stress the reality and importance of the flesh. It did not serve a solitary purpose. A writing such as the Protevangelium Jacobi serves nonpolemical ends of entertainment and of filling in lacunae from the stories of Mary and Jesus, but also apologetic aims in answering the charges against the savior and his mother by a pagan critic such as Celsus. It is not

important to my study that the polemical functions of this or that forgery be seen as the one and only purpose of the work. On a practical level, the multifunctionality of several of these texts means that they will be discussed under more than one rubric.

The rubrics that I have devised are topical, guided to some extent by a loosely chronological logic. The earliest orthonymous Christian writings are concerned to no small extent with questions of eschatology. 1 Thessalonians, for example, is written, at least in part, to comfort those whose expectations of an imminent appearance of the Lord from heaven had been frustrated by the passage of time, and who were, as a result, concerned over the fate of those who had died in the interim. 1 Corinthians is written, again in part, to correct those within the community with an overly realized eschatology that claimed the benefits of the resurrected existence were already available and enjoyed in the present age, with little or nothing to expect in a cataclysmic break with the present in the future. Given this feature of early authentic writings, it is no surprise that our earliest surviving forgeries too deal with issues of eschatology—most obviously 2 Thessalonians but also, I will argue, Colossians and Ephesians (Chapter Seven). It is of some interest that the range of eschatological views that result through juxtaposition of the various perspectives found in these writings were all deemed worthy of hearing, in no small part because of the apostolic authority that lay behind them. And so, all of them were eventually accepted as canonical views, resulting in the paradoxical eschatology of "already and not yet." From early days, followers of Jesus were entrenched in theologies of paradox, later to come to fruition in complex Christological ("fully divine and fully human") and Trinitarian ("three persons but one God") views.

The eschatological questions did not cease with the passing of the first Christian generation, of course, and so later forged writings continued to take them on, both within the canon (2 Timothy; 2 Peter) and outside (Gospel of Thomas; Chapter Eight). Paul, the alleged author of most of these sundry works, was himself a debated topic from early days, as is evident from his own writings, such as the Corinthian correspondence and the letter to the Galatians. And so we find a number of early forgeries that are concerned either to promote or to attack Paul's authority, for example, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Acts (which I will argue, as I've mentioned, is a non-pseudepigraphic forgery) on one side of the issue (Chapter Nine), and James, Jude, the Epistula Petri, and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* on the other (Chapter Ten). A closely related problem, best known precisely from the Pauline letters, has to do with the status of Jews and, relatedly, Jewish Christianity; these issues too were dealt with in polemical forgeries

(including those discussed in Chapter Ten), such as the Gospel of Peter, the Epistula Clementis, the Didascalia, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Abgar Correspondence, the Gospel of Nicodemus, and other writings of the Pilate cycle (Chapter Eleven).

Also connected with Paul and his churches were problems of church hierarchy, structure, organization, and authority. Forgeries dealing with such issues abounded, from the Pastoral epistles of the New Testament through the “church order” literature (e.g., the Didascalia, Apostolic Church Order, Apostolic Canons, Apostolic Constitutions), but also in such writings as the Paraphrase of Shem from Nag Hammadi and the Ascension of Isaiah (Chapter Twelve).

Among the internecine theological conflicts that eventually emerged in the period, none proved so productive of forgery as those involving the nature, status, and relevance of “the flesh,” especially because views of the flesh became intricately connected with so many other crucial and debated issues, such as the unity of the Godhead, the nature of creation, the person of Christ, the efficacy of his death, the reality of his physical resurrection, and the future fate of the believer. And so numerous forgeries written under apostolic authority emerged, arguing either against the flesh (the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, the Book of Thomas the Contender, the Gospel of Thomas, the Paraphrase of Shem) or in favor of it (3 Corinthians, the Epistula Apostolorum, the Nag Hammadi tractate Melchizedek, the Apocalypse of Peter and the Apocalypse of Paul, and even, by misdirection, I will argue, the extant letter of Laodiceans; all in Chapter Thirteen).

Other theological debates engendered yet other forgeries from disputes with the Manichaeans (Abgar Correspondence) to the Arian controversies (the Pseudo-Ignatians; Chapter Fourteen). And, as mentioned, a significant range of forgeries appeared as apologetic defenses of the faith, in quite diverse but manifest ways, including the Martyrdom of Polycarp (which I will argue is a non-pseudepigraphic forgery), the Protevangelium Jacobi, the Acts of Pilate, the correspondence of Paul and Seneca, and the Sibylline oracles (Chapter Fifteen). In the final chapter I return to the question of self-justification, asking how the forgers of early Christian documents may have explained to themselves the morality of their literary endeavors.

As should be clear from this overview, my concern in the study is less with establishing where forgery has occurred than in determining the function of the forgery, in particular as this relates to Christian polemics. But the function of a forgery, naturally, depends on the prior question, and so, where there are

significant debates that need to be addressed, I take them on. Here I should reiterate my three-pronged approach. Works whose authorship continues to be a hotly debated topic—for example 2 Thessalonians or 1 Peter—I discuss at length, making a range of arguments in support of my view that they are in fact forged. Other works, about which there is less disagreement—for example 2 Peter—I devote much less argument to, appealing instead to widely accepted lines of reasoning. In yet other instances there is no scholarly disagreement of any moment—the Gospel of Peter or the Letters of Paul and Seneca, for example. In such instances I focus almost exclusively on the question of function.

It is my view that in every instance of forgery that I discuss, the intention of the forger was to deceive his readers into thinking he was someone other than who he was; his motivation was not only to receive a simple hearing of his views (although certainly that) but also to authorize his views through the authority provided by the status of his falsely assumed authorial name. His goal was to advance his own polemical agenda.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Early Pauline Forgeries Dealing with Eschatology

Eschatology was supremely important at the outset of the Christian movement. Jesus' apocalyptic proclamation of the coming kingdom, which was to appear before "this generation passes away" (Mark 13:30), found its mirror in the preaching of his earliest followers, who expected Jesus himself soon to return from heaven as the Son of Man. The message was continued in the missionary preaching of Paul and his followers, as evidenced in our earliest Christian writings, such as 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. Alternative eschatologies also appeared in the early stages of the Christian movement, as Paul's own writings attest. Some members of the Thessalonian congregation came to fear that those who had died already had lost out on their eschatological reward. Others in not-so-distant Corinth came to think that they had begun to reap the benefits of that reward in this life. Paul wrote in order to correct and comfort the despondent Thessalonians and to disabuse the enthusiastic Corinthians: there is a future reward, it will appear with the coming of Jesus, and it will involve a radical transformation not only of the world and its existing order, but also of the human body, as there will be resurrection of both the living and the dead into an immortal existence.

In view of the alternative perspectives more widely available, it comes as no surprise that some of the earliest Christian forgeries deal with just this issue of eschatology, produced by unknown authors claiming the authority of the apostle himself. At the end of the day it is impossible to provide relative datings of these pseudepigraphic efforts of Pauline Christians;[1] it is completely plausible to think, however, that they emerged not long after the death of Paul himself, or even, conceivably, while he was still alive. There is no way to know.[2] In any event it may well be that just as 1 Thessalonians is the earliest surviving orthonymous Christian writing of any kind, its "sequel," 2 Thessalonians, is the earliest surviving Christian forgery.

SECOND THESSALONIANS

The History of the Question

Problems connected to the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians were first recognized by J. C. Chr. Schmidt in 1801.[3] Schmidt pointed out that 1 Thessalonians is a letter allegedly by Paul that maintains that the end is imminent, whereas 2 Thessalonians warns against a letter allegedly by Paul that maintained that the end is imminent (2:2). How could one explain this situation? If 1 Thessalonians were written first, would Paul not remember what he had written by the time he wrote 2 Thessalonians? If, conversely, 2 Thessalonians were written first, would Paul not remember that he warned his readers against precisely the views that he now embraced in the second letter? “In any case, it remains puzzling why he described in one letter the appearance of Christ as near, and in the other warned not to expect it as being near.”[4]

Schmidt considers the obvious possibilities that Paul at some point changed his mind and rejected his earlier views, but he finds these possibilities wanting. In addition, he evaluates every part of 1 Thessalonians as being completely Pauline, including the words of the imminent coming of Christ. Is 2 Thessalonians then to be considered a forgery? No, for Schmidt, this letter too appears completely Pauline, with the exception of the offending passage, the warning of 2:1–2 and the fantasies about the Antichrist that follow. As he points out: “The accuser is frequently himself at fault and complains only in order to remove suspicion from his person.”[5] In this case, though, it is not the whole letter that is forged; it is only the twelve verses in question. Once 2:1–12 are removed from the letter, 2:13 can be seen to follow the end of chapter 1 without obvious break. What we have, then, is not a forgery but a falsely interpolated pericope.

As we will see, for later scholars it was precisely the peculiarly Pauline character of 2 Thessalonians—specifically its close resemblance to 1 Thessalonians itself—that, somewhat ironically, made it suspect. But Schmidt at least opened the debate with a plausible scenario, for directly at the point where 2 Thessalonians begins to diverge from its predecessor in theme it begins to contradict it in substance. It was many decades, however, before wider attention was drawn to the tensions between the two books, and between 2 Thessalonians and the other Pauline letters in general. In 1862 Hilgenfeld made the argument still favored by many scholars today, that 2 Thessalonians was forged precisely in order to replace its predecessor as Paul’s (only) letter to the Thessalonians.[6] Thirty years later it had become yet more widely suspected that 2 Thessalonians could not be Pauline, as summed up in the arguments of Holtzmann: unlike the authentic Pauline letters, there was no anti-Jewish polemic in the book, in places it uses non-Pauline language, it contains a number of expansions of parallels

from the first letter, and it contains no citations of the Hebrew Bible.[7]

These lines of argumentation can be easily picked apart and so were not widely convincing across the critical spectrum. A solid basis for seeing 2 Thessalonians as non-Pauline was not laid until Wrede's penetrating analysis of its relationship to 1 Thessalonians, about which I will have more to say presently. Trilling was the first to write a major commentary based on the assumption of non-Pauline authorship; important contributions by Marxsen, Krenz, and Bailey have furthered the discussion. There continue to be holdouts for Pauline authorship, most notably, among critical scholars, Robert Jewett and Abraham Malherbe. Malherbe can claim, in his Anchor Bible Commentary, that the "majority" of biblical scholars continues to hold to authenticity.[8] This may be true, but if so, it is simply because a sizeable plurality of biblical scholars (counting broadly) hold theological views that make the presence of literary forgeries in the canon of scripture untenable on principle. Among scholars with no such scruples, the balance swings in the other direction, and for compelling reasons.

2 Thessalonians as a Forgery

One reason the case for the inauthenticity of 2 Thessalonians has occasionally seemed wanting, even to some very fine scholars, is that critics have often resorted to a shotgun approach, citing every possible argument, good or bad, in support of their position. It is all too easy to dismiss bad arguments, leaving an appearance of evidence in balance, pro and con. And so, for example, the letter is often said to lack Paul's customary "warmth" (are all of Paul's writings necessarily warm? Even to the same congregation? Think of the different fragments of correspondence with the Corinthians—including 2 Cor. 10–13); the focus is on Christ as Kurios rather than on his cross (does Paul have to focus on the cross, in everything he says?); the letter does not employ the diatribe style (as if Paul was obliged to do so); the letter is lacking in justification language (do we need to read every Pauline letter with Lutheran blinders?). A scholar such as Malherbe can easily dismiss such claims, making the other arguments seem weak by association.

A better tack is to drive hard the compelling arguments. The two most striking involve (1) the impressive parallels to 1 Thessalonians, first pushed strenuously by Wrede, which, when examined closely, seem virtually inexplicable on grounds other than that a second author (not Paul) has used Paul's letter as a model for his own; and (2) the substantive differences *from* 1 Thessalonians in

precisely the passage (recognized already by Schmidt) where the parallels evaporate. It is the combination of these two arguments that proves especially suasive. Where the author of 2 Thessalonians has borrowed words and phrases from 1 Thessalonians, of course he sounds like Paul (it is easy to take over the words of another writing, after all). And where he projects his own views onto the apostle, he in fact stands at odds with him. Add to these arguments some comments on differences in aspects of style in the author's free composition, and there are solid reasons for thinking that 2 Thessalonians was written by someone intent on authorizing a non-Pauline view in the name of the apostle himself.

The Relationship to 1 Thessalonians

Over a century ago Wrede showed that the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians are massive and operate on various levels; his arguments have been confirmed and strengthened by Krenz and others.[9] As will be seen, these parallels do not indicate that Paul wrote both letters; on the contrary, a later author is imitating Paul.[10]

The easiest places to imitate the style and wording of a letter are its beginning and ending, and here the two Thessalonian letters are virtually identical. What is more, their concurrences make them stand alone among the Pauline writings: these are not the ways Paul begins and ends any of his other letters. With respect to the beginnings, we have the following:

> Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη. (1 Thess. 1:1)
>
> Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη. . . . (2 Thess. 1:1)

They are virtually the same. The three named authors are identical in each place, and they are not further identified apart from their names. It is especially striking that in only these two letters of the entire Pauline corpus is Paul not described with an epithet such as "apostle" (as in most of his letters) or "slave" (Philippians) or "prisoner for Christ" (Philemon). Moreover, both letters refer to the church as comprising the people of a place—"of the Thessalonians"—as opposed to naming the city in which they dwell ("the church of God which is in Corinth"); this too is unlike any other Pauline letter.

So too the closing of the letters:

> ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν. (1 Thess. 5:28)
> ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. (2 Thess. 3:18)

Apart from the πάντων, this is a nine-word sequence of verbatim agreement. Other agreements occur throughout the letters, sometimes at the simple level of phrasing. In the following instances, the wording is found only in these two letters in the entire Pauline corpus. This should not be taken to mean that the second letter is "obviously Pauline," as some interpreters such as Robert Jewett would maintain: it is quite easy for a copyist to take over words from another letter.

(found only, in the Pauline corpus, in 1 Thess. 1:3 and 2 Thess. 1:11)

(as reference to pagans, only in 1 Thess. 4:5; 2 Thess. 1:8)

used with ἀγάπη (only 1 Thess. 3:12; 2 Thess. 1:3)

(only 1 Thess. 5:12; 2 Thess. 2:1; the verb occurs only two other times in the Pauline corpus, 1 Thess. 4:1 in the first person plural and Phil. 4:3, first singular)

(only 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13)

(only 1 Thess. 3:11; 2 Thess. 3:5 and as an optative, both times)

In addition, στηρίξαι with ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας is found in 1 Thess. 3:13 and 2 Thess. 2:17 (worded slightly differently, but both coming at the end of the body of the letter, in the internal benediction, before the paranesis), and only here in Paul's letters; only in 1 Thess. 4.7 and 2 Thess. 2:13–14 are "call and sanctification" joined together; and the root ατακ is found in 1 Thess. 5:14 and 2 Thess. 3:6, 7, and 11, and nowhere else in the entire New Testament. Most striking, and most frequently noted is the close connection of 1 Thess. 2:9 and 2 Thess. 3:8: Νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν.

How are we to imagine such impressive and extensive verbal parallels? Is it likely that Paul remembered to the very word what he said at times in his earlier letter, creating verbatim agreements (found in none of his other writings from the same time) extending sometimes to sequences of nine, ten, or more words? Even if he wrote the second letter just, say, six weeks later, would he remember such phrases, which involve not only important ideas but also off-the-cuff comments and expressions? It is simple to see how a copyist may have taken over words and phrases here and there to make the letter sound so much like the first one. But why would Paul have done so, assuming, say, that he kept a copy on hand?

Why would he delve into the heart of the first letter to pull out a word, a phrase, a sentence that he had earlier used to be sure to use it again? Is this how Paul ever writes?

We do have a way of knowing. There are other letters that deal with topics similar to one another: Galatians and Romans, for example. But such extensive "borrowings" are not found in them.[11] And we have yet other letters written—as allegedly were the Thessalonian epistles—to the same community within a relatively short period of time (1 and 2 Corinthians). Once again, there is nothing like this phenomenon to be found.

The agreements do not occur simply on the level of words, phrases, and sentences. The structure and layout of the two letters are strikingly parallel. Both, unlike any other Pauline letter, have two thanksgivings (instead of one), one at the outset and one in the body of the letter (1 Thess. 1:2–10; 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:3–12; 2:13).[12] They both contain an eschatological section, an admonition to be strong and to abide in the apostolic teaching, and a warning against idleness. Indeed, as Bailey has stressed, there is not a single major theme in 2 Thessalonians that is not also found in 1 Thessalonians.[13]

This is not how Paul wrote any of his other letters, by replicating the structure (to this degree) and taking over the vocabulary and even sentences of an earlier letter he wrote. But it is no stretch to imagine that this is how a forger would operate, to provide a Pauline feel to the letter. The evidence is clinched when seen in relation to the style and theology of the second letter, which differ from those of the first.

Issues of Style

It is altogether simple for a forger to take over the words and phrases of an author's other writing. It is a different matter to be able to imitate the author's style when engaging in free composition. Jewett sensibly objected to the stylistic arguments mounted by Trilling, because—as often happens in discussions of style in the Deutero-Paulines—Trilling offered no bases of comparison with the established Pauline writings.[14] It is one thing to say that an author uses excessively long, complex sentences; it is another thing to show that this is somehow different from how Paul himself was known to write.

Two points should be kept in view at the outset of any discussion of Pauline style. The first is that the question is never whether Paul was capable of writing in one style or another. He was an educated author, and like all educated authors he could vary his style, to some degree at least, as he saw fit. But everyone does

in fact typically write in a certain style, often without putting a great deal of thought into questions such as how to effect subordination, whether to prefer subordination to coordination, how to choose which conjunctions to prefer over others, how to construct participial clauses, how to employ the infinitive, and so on. Most authors, unless they are overwhelmingly conscious of being involved in a rhetorical exercise (for example, trained rhetoricians working on an oratorical production), simply write the way they write. No one can plausibly claim that Paul could not have written in the style of, say, Luke or the author of Hebrews, if he had really wanted to. At the same time, no one can plausibly claim that Paul did write that way.

The second point will require more extended discussion, and so I leave it to a short Interlude to come at the conclusion of the next chapter. It is often claimed by scholars of the New Testament that differences of writing style among, say, the Pauline or Petrine letters can be accounted for by the use of secretaries. This secretary hypothesis has become a panacea for all things authorially dubious, as even a quick survey of the commentaries makes abundantly clear. It nonetheless rests on an extremely thin, virtually nonexistent, evidentiary basis. All this I will try to show anon; I mention it here simply to forestall the anticipated objection that stylistic differences within the Pauline corpus derive from secretarial input.[15]

The most directed study of the style of 2 Thessalonians was undertaken by Darryl Schmidt, who showed on the basis of several unrelated but significant grounds that the letter differs, stylistically, from the undisputed Pauline letters.[16] Schmidt's essay does not engage in bland generalities about long sentences and strange style, but provides a detailed demonstration that 2 Thessalonians (and Colossians and Ephesians) are not written in Paul's typical style. Among his criteria, three are especially striking. First, he considers sentences as measured by the numbers of embedded clauses and levels of embedding. 2 Thess. 1:3–12 is often pointed to as a long and complex sentence. It is true, as Schmidt points out, that there are other sentences in the undisputed letters that are nearly as long (2 Cor. 6:3–10, 11:24–31). But these letters do not match the complexity of the sentences in 2 Thessalonians. Specifically, Schmidt takes the longest sentence in the opening thanksgiving section of each of the Pauline letters and measures how many embedded clauses there are and how many layers of embeddedness. The results are quite telling: in Romans there are five embedded clauses at four layers of embeddedness; 1 Corinthians: six clauses at four layers; 2 Corinthians: five clauses at three levels; Philippians: six clauses at one level; 1 Thessalonians: ten clauses at five levels. Contrast these figures with the Deutero-Paulines:

Colossians: twelve clauses at eight levels; Ephesians: eighteen clauses at thirteen levels; and most striking, 2 Thessalonians: a whopping twenty-two clauses at fifteen levels of embeddedness. The point, again, is not that this is an impossibly more complex style (it is not nearly as complex as that found in numerous other authors); the point is that it is an uncharacteristically Pauline style.

Schmidt then considers a different stylistic feature, the patterns of genitive constructions in nonphrase strings, of which there are three kinds: (1) article + noun + article + noun (genitive); (2) a genitive pronoun added to a string; (c) anarthrous nouns in the same kind of string. When calculated for every 1,000 words in the text, one finds the following frequencies of these kinds of strings (Appendix 2): Romans 12.8 strings per thousand words; 1 Corinthians 8.8 strings; 2 Corinthians 13.1 strings; Galatians 15.2 strings; Philippians 7.4 strings; 1 Thessalonians 10.8 strings; Philemon 11.9 strings. Again, the contrast with the Deutero-Paulines, and especially 2 Thessalonians is stark: Colossians 29.7 strings; Ephesians 31.7 strings; and 2 Thessalonians 26.7 strings.

Third, Schmidt considers the frequency with which a writing uses coordinating and subordinating constructions. Leaving out the ubiquitous καί, he finds the relative frequency of coordination versus subordination (per hundred words) to work out as follows: Romans 68:34; 1 Corinthians 77:47; 2 Corinthians 59:42; Galatians 65:44; 1 Thessalonians 49:38; Philippians 53:36; Philemon 50:38. Once again there is a contrast with the Deutero-Paulines, where subordination is far more relatively common: Colossians 18:25; Ephesians 27:26; 2 Thessalonians 41:37.

The ultimate payoff of these three measurements is that the general sense that scholars have had for many decades that 2 Thessalonians (and the other two Deutero-Paulines) contains a more complex style than the undisputed letters—including the author’s model, 1 Thessalonians—is in fact borne out. It is indeed a more complex style. In isolation this kind of stylistic demonstration can carry little weight. Authors can and do vary their style, and statistical models are constantly challenged on grounds related both to the statistics and the models. But when taken in tandem with the earlier consideration, that the author of 2 Thessalonians has followed the structure and borrowed the words, phrases, and even sentences of 1 Thessalonians, the fact that the nonborrowed materials appear in a non-Pauline style appears far more formidable. Remaining doubts can be removed by the most complex of the three main arguments against Pauline authorship, the theology of the letter.

The Theology of 2 Thessalonians

As recognized already by J. E. Chr. Schmidt more than two centuries ago, the theological problem of 2 Thessalonians involves the divergent eschatological outlook of 2:1–12. There are two issues involved: Is the author addressing a problem of a realized or an imminent eschatology? And does his resolution of the problem contradict the views of 1 Thess. 4:13–5:11?

The first issue hinges to a great extent on the exegesis of 2 Thess. 2:2, and especially the key term ἐνέστηκεν.. The readers are urged, with respect to the "parousia" of Christ and "our gathering together with him," not to be "quickly shaken or disturbed"—whether "by spirit, by a word, or by a letter as if from us" to the effect that ἐνέστηκεν.. In this context, does the perfect of ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου. mean that the day of the Lord "has already come and is now present," an eschatology analogous to what Paul disparages in 1 Corinthians, or that "it is virtually here and is soon to be realized," comparable, say, to the proclamation of Jesus in Mark 1:15, "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ)??[17]

The use of the term ἐνίστημι in other Christian literature of the period is of only limited help. Twice in the writings of Paul and three times in the letter of Barnabas the word is clearly used to refer to "things present" as opposed to things "yet to come" (ἐνεστῶτα . . . μέλλοντα; Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22; Barn. 1.7, 5.3, 17.2). On two other occasions it is used in this sense without the explicit contrast, in Barn. 4.1 and Heb. 9:9. At other times the usage—whether present reality or imminent occurrence—is ambiguous, as in Gal. 1:4 ("to deliver us from the present/from the impending evil age"). Somewhat less ambivalent is 1 Cor. 7:26, which like 2 Thess. 2:2 uses the perfect tense, but probably to imply a future event; it is because of the "impending distress" (probably) that one should not change one's marital status. In 2 Tim. 3:1 the term is used to denote something yet to come, but there it is an unambiguous future tense.

As is the case with all these other instances, it is the context that is decisive for the meaning in 2 Thess. 2:2. The passage appears to require the verb to refer to something that is yet to happen but is very much imminent. For one thing, it makes little sense to suppose that the audience would be deeply shaken or disturbed by thinking that they were already experiencing the glories of the eschatological day of the Lord. Others who held that view—the Corinthian enthusiasts, for example—seemed rather to have exulted in the idea. If, on the other hand, the destruction of all things was ready to occur at any moment, that could well frighten anyone, even those sure to be on the winning side.

But more than that, the eschatological view under attack can best be discerned in the argument used by the author to oppose it. What the author decidedly does

not do is malign their aberrant eschatological notion by arguing that their present existence is anything *but* the glorious life of the kingdom. He does not, that is, correct their view by pointing out that they were still living in a world filled with evil, suffering, pain, and sin, or stress for them that they are living lives of hardship and suffering rather than glory, as, for instance, Paul does, using considerable sarcasm, in 1 Cor. 4:8, against opponents who thought very much this same thing.

Instead, this "Paul" shows the Thessalonians that they are wrong in their eschatological views, stated in 2:2, by giving them the correct apocalyptic scenario, in view of their incorrect one. The Day of the Lord is not come/almost here because first there must be "the rebellion" and then "the man of lawlessness" must arise, who will be slain by the Lord at his parousia. Why does the author explain that the "restraining power" needs to be released and that this anti-Christ figure has to arise before the end can come? It is because he is correcting a view that maintained that the end was almost here and that nothing yet need happen before it could come.

Thus the author is providing his readers with the true apocalyptic scenario in order to rectify the false one they held. That is to say, he does not correct a nonapocalyptic view by insisting on an apocalyptic one. He and his readers both agree that there is to be an apocalyptic sequence of events at the very end of the age, at the coming of the Day of the Lord. But they have come to imagine—on some grounds connected wrongly with him ("a letter as if by us")—a scenario that needs to be set straight. Their idea is not that there is to be no scenario at all; it is that it involves a scenario that can happen at any moment, imminently.

That is why the author opens his discussion of the issue by appealing to "the parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him" (2:1). He is appealing here not to a new or different teaching that his readers do not accept. He is beginning his plea on a common ground of shared tradition: whatever their differences of eschatological outlook, they agree that the end will involve a return of Jesus and a gathering of the believers to join him. In arguing in this way, the author is indeed following an established Pauline approach, easily available to him from the other Pauline letters. When Paul wanted to argue against the enthusiasts in Corinth that the resurrection was a physical, future event, he did so by establishing common ground, that Jesus was bodily raised from the dead. 1 Corinthians 15 does not provide a demonstration that Jesus' resurrection was bodily; it is an argument based on the agreed belief that it was bodily. Since Jesus' resurrection was bodily, so too, by implication, will be the resurrection of those who follow him. But that necessarily means, for Paul, that

it is a future event, not a past event already experienced.

So too in 2 Thessalonians. An author claiming to be Paul establishes the common ground he has with the readers, that the end involves the “parousia and gathering together with the Lord.” If that is true, then the Day of the Lord has not yet appeared; it is yet to come. His readers have not worked through this implication carefully. The parousia and ingathering are to come as God’s response to the evil in the world; it is then that he will overthrow all that is opposed to him to establish his kingdom. But the forces of evil have not yet been fully unleashed. Only when they are, with the appearance of the anti-Christ figure, will God respond by bringing Jesus back from heaven for judgment on the earth. The eschatology being opposed is not realized but absolutely imminent.

It should not be objected that Paul himself, in combating the enthusiasts of 1 Corinthians, also provided an apocalyptic scenario in order to show that they were wrong precisely in adopting a realized eschatology. That is not the function of 1 Cor. 15:50–57. Instead, the scenario there is given only after Paul has shown that his opponents’ eschatological views are wrong, in order to lay out for them what is still to happen, once they are forced (in his opinion) to acknowledge that there is still an eschatology yet to happen. Moreover, the scenario in the Corinthian passage involves what will happen when Christ returns, not what needs to happen before he returns. To this extent, as well, it is incommensurate with the strategy of the author of 2 Thessalonians. And the reason is clear: one passage is opposing a realized and the other an imminent eschatology, as recognized by a range of recent scholars.[18]

There are several payoffs for this brief exegesis. For one thing, it means that the ἐνέστηκεν in 2:2 is indeed to be taken as an equivalent to the ἤγγικεν of Mark 1:15, so that the verse should be understood as meaning that the readers should not be disturbed by the notion that “the Day of the Lord is virtually here and soon to be realized.” The Thessalonians can be assured, on the contrary, that the Day is not absolutely imminent.

As a result, the passage does indeed appear to contradict what Paul says in his undisputed letters, such as Rom. 13:12: ἡ νὺξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν or Phil. 4:5, ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς.. Yet more important, the view stands at odds with 1 Thessalonians as well, where the end is to come suddenly and unexpectedly, “like a thief in the night” (5:2). It should not be objected that 1 Thessalonians does not claim that the day will come “like a thief” to the followers of Jesus, but only to the unwary on the outside. It is true that this is the rhetoric that Paul uses (“For you yourselves know full well”; 5:2). But his exhortations belie his

rhetoric: if he really thought that his readers needed no reminder, he would scarcely have produced such a strenuous one. The exhortations that follow—to be alert and awake, lest they be caught off guard when the Lord arrives (1 Thess. 5:6–8)—make no sense unless the Thessalonians stood in need of warning. But that they do need to be warned about the imminence of the end stands at odds with what the author of 2 Thessalonians thinks: for this other author, the end will not come suddenly, without advance warning, like a thief in the night. There will in fact be plenty of warning, a whole sequence of events that must transpire. There is still some time to sleep and drink.

It may fairly be objected that the thief image of 1 Thessalonians speaks not of an absolutely imminent appearance of the Lord, but of a sudden appearance. However one stands on that issue, the reality is that the image is at odds with the view set forth by the author of 2 Thessalonians. For him the end is not coming right away, and it is not coming without advanced warning. Moreover, if it is true that this is what he actually taught the Thessalonians while he "was still with" them (2:5), then it is very difficult indeed to explain the problem of 1 Thessalonians, where members of the congregation are perplexed as to why the end has not happened right away and some have died in the interim (4:13–18). Paul's teaching would have been that it was *not* to come right away, and they would have known that. They thought otherwise—believing the end was imminent—because that is what Paul taught them. Conversely, if Paul is right in what he says in 1 Thess. 5:2, that they themselves "know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night," then it is well nigh impossible to understand how he can then tell them in 2 Thessalonians that the coming will not be sudden and unexpected, like a thief. It won't be like that at all, but will be anticipated by clear signs to all who can see. For 2 Thessalonians the coming of the Lord will not be like a burglar after dark; it will be like the much anticipated and broadcast arrival of a king.

It might be added that in view of the parallels to 1 Thessalonians advocates for the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians typically claim that it was written on the heels of the other letter. But how would Paul change his eschatological views so suddenly and decisively? Coupled with the problems posed by the parallels themselves, and the differences of style, the case for inauthenticity is very strong.

Nor does it resolve the tensions between the letters by following the suggestion occasionally made since Grotius in 1640, to reverse the chronological sequence of the two letters.[19] In that case the problems are simply compounded, as Krenz and others have noted. Under some such scenario, Paul first indicated

that the Day of the Lord would not come except until some easily recognized signs had appeared (an anti-Christ entering into the Temple declaring himself divine), and then shortly after changed his mind and declared that the Thessalonians need to be constantly vigilant because the day would come like a thief, without advanced warning. Nor does it help to think, with Harnack, Dibelius, Goguel, and Schweizer—each of them with different scenarios—that the two letters are addressed by Paul to two different audiences in the Thessalonian church; there is in fact no indication of different audiences (quite the contrary), and the eschatological messages are in tension regardless of whom he addressed.[20]

Scholars who hold on to the authenticity of the letter occasionally mount arguments against the plausibility of it being a forgery, but in no instance can these parries carry conviction. Jewett, for example, claims that "there is scarcely enough time between Paul's death and C.E 100 for a forgery to gain credence."[21] Here, however, unreflective "common sense" must give way to a wider knowledge of ancient practices of forgery. For as we have already seen, numerous ancient authors complained about forgeries—quite successful ones—circulating in their own names, even within their own lifetimes (not just forty years later). One naturally thinks of Martial, living in the same century as the Thessalonian correspondence (poems allegedly by him, circulating while he was still living and writing, and even in his home city); or of Galen some decades later (the whole point of *De libriis propriis*); or of Apuleius (a letter produced at his trial); or for later periods, thinking of written correspondence, letters in the names of such prominent figures as Jerome and Augustine, circulating in their own literary environs. The irony is that scholars who claim that 2 Thessalonians is authentic more or less have to admit that Paul himself envisaged the possibility of a Pauline forgery in his own lifetime, on the grounds of 2 Thessalonians itself (2:2).

It is sometimes claimed, similarly, that if the letter was sent to the Thessalonians, and if it contradicted what was said in 1 Thessalonians, they would have known and rejected it as inauthentic.[22] But this objection assumes that the letter would have been sent to Thessalonica. Why would it have been? It is a forgery! It could have been circulated absolutely anywhere in the Greek-speaking Christian world. Finally, it has sometimes been argued that there is no plausible historical context after Paul's day for such a letter, when apocalyptic fervor had died out from the Christian communities: "it appears in fact that the intense expectation of the parousia typical for Paul's lifetime tended to slacken after his death."[23] Even more than the other parries, this appears to be grasping

at straws: imminent apocalyptic hopes have never yet died out, to our day, and never will within Christendom, world without end. Of greater moment, they certainly had not died out by the end of the first century. One needs only think of such texts as Didache 16 and (how can it not have occurred?) the book of Revelation.

2 Thessalonians as a Counterforgery

A good deal of exegetical ink has been spilled over the source of the Thessalonians' alleged disturbance that the Day of the Lord was imminent. The author tells them not to be upset μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι᾽ ἐπιστολῆς ὡς. Here again, there are two major issues. First, does the final phrase, δι᾽ ἡμῶν. apply to all three sources of information or only to the third? Has some kind of spiritual (ecstatic?) communication "as by us," some kind of oral teaching "as by us," and some kind of letter "as by us" been invoked? Or has the teaching come through a spiritual communication, an oral teaching, and a letter that by itself is allegedly "by us?"[24]

For the purposes of my discussion here, the decision does not much matter, as in both cases, the author is referring to a letter "as by us." Still, the exegetical decision is best made in reference to the broader context, and, as we will see, this context is significant for yet other reasons. For there is a second reference to "our letter" in 2:15, where the author urges his readers to stand fast and hold to the traditions ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι᾽ ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.. Since in this second case, there are only two items mentioned—a word and a letter—it does not appear to be an exact backward glance to the earlier list of three items. That in itself would suggest that the "spirit" was not included among the items connected with "us" in 2:2. And if all three items are not connected to "us," then it seems unlikely that two of the three were. It is the third item in the list that came "as by us."

Of greater moment for our reflections here is, second, the meaning and significance of ὡς in 2:2. Does the author refer to the earlier letter "as having (really) come from us" or "as if (but not really) having come from us"? Despite the widespread disagreement among exegetes, here too the wording of 2:15 must be decisive. If the author of 2:2 wanted to refer to a letter that "really did" come from us, he would scarcely have needed to provide the "ὡς" in the first place. He would simply have said "through our letter"—as he says in 2:15. The reference to a letter in 2:15, in fact, is given in contrast to the letter mentioned in 2:2. The

earlier reference is to a letter “as if” by us, and is by implication denigrated by the author, who “corrects” the eschatology that this false letter conveyed. The later reference is to a letter that really is “ours,” which is affirmed in what it taught its readers (“stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught” in that letter).

Hanna Roose has recently argued that by using the phrase ὡς δι᾽ ἡμων the author of 2:2 intentionally left the reference to the earlier letter ambiguous, because as a forger claiming to be Paul writing to the Thessalonians he wanted the earlier letter to look believably Pauline (really from us, i.e., 1 Thessalonians) while casting some doubt in the minds of his actual readers (it was not really from us).[25] This solution is probably too clever by half. Among other things it has to assume that there are no other references to Paul’s “first” letter in 2 Thessalonians, since, if there are, then the ambiguity of 2:2 falls apart. But 2:15 does seem to be a reference to Paul’s earlier letter (1 Thessalonians). How to resolve that problem? Roose, with a number of other scholars, including notably Lindemann, maintains that 2:15 refers not to an earlier letter but to the present one: the readers are to hold fast to the teachings found in it. This interpretation, however, overlooks the force of the aorist ἐδιδάχθητε in 2:15. The author is referring to a previous, past set of teaching that came by oral delivery (a word) and a written communication (a letter), not to the present letter.

This conclusion also shows the problem with the view widely taken otherwise, for example, by Lindemann and others, that 2:2 is to be understood to be a disparaging comment on 1 Thessalonians.[26] In this view, by a forger who wanted his readers to think that *this* letter (2 Thessalonians)—and its eschatological views—was the one from Paul, whereas the other, 1 Thessalonians, was the forgery. Were this view true, 2 Thessalonians would be a counterforgery with chutzpah. As Marxsen expresses the view, without reference to Lindemann’s influential article, which was published five years earlier: “In truth, 2 Thessalonians must be regarded as Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians. It alone is the genuine Pauline letter. … The author of 2 Thess wants to edge out 1 Thess with his writing.” Later: “The author of 2 Thess wants to replace 1 Thess with his writing.”[27]

The problem overlooked by this view is, again, the positive reference to an earlier letter in 2:15. Whatever the author is castigating in 2:2, it is not the letter of 1 Thessalonians, as tempting as that view might be. The author in fact contrasts the δι᾽ ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι᾽ ἡμῶν of 2:2 with δι᾽ ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν of 2:15. It is only the latter that is “actually” by the author; the other was not. This is an author who knows 1 Thessalonians, who realizes that it is accepted as

authentically Pauline, who embraces it of necessity (and even copies it)—since he too wants to be thought of as Paul—and who speaks disparagingly of some other letter, allegedly but not really by Paul, which conveyed an aberrant understanding of eschatology. The irony is that this lost letter—whether it ever existed or not cannot be known—would have adopted an eschatology very much like that found in 1 Thessalonians, and the author does want to counter its views.

Eva-Maria Becker has recently played with the idea that this lost letter was an actual Pauline letter in circulation.[28] This is a possibility, but the reality is that whoever forged 2 Thessalonians, wanting to label this other letter (whether it existed or not) a forgery, would have had no way of knowing, at the end of the day, whether it was authentic or not, assuming it existed. And so for the interpretation of 2 Thessalonians the question is moot. What appears certain is that the letter of 2:2 is not 1 Thessalonians but a letter allegedly by Paul that the author wants to denigrate both in terms of authorship and, relatedly, authority. It conveys the false teaching of the eschaton. But since 2 Thessalonians affirms 1 Thessalonians, and yet proffers an alternative understanding of eschatology, one must conclude that its author wanted its readers to read the teaching of 1 Thessalonians in light of its own eschatological assertions. Or, to use the language that has recently come to be in vogue, 2 Thessalonians appears to be providing “reading instructions” for 1 Thessalonians.[29]

H. Roose, who sees the relation of the two letters in this light, has made a specific argument for how the “instructions” work, by describing the divergent understandings of the parousia in the two letters, arguing that when they are taken together as a unit the “Day of the Lord” and the “parousia” become coterminous, so that there is now a firm thematic unity between the events of 1 Thess. 4:13–18 on the one hand and 5:1–11 on the other. This view may be taking the matter a step too far, as surely Paul himself saw a firm thematic unity between these two passages that, off his pen, did not experience a chapter break between them. But it is true that when the letters are read together, the “imminent” and “sudden” eschatology of 1 Thessalonians is muted and altered.

It should not be objected that no one would place two such letters in a canon and assume they were complementary when they so clearly stand at odds with one another. Church leaders did place them in the same canon and Christian readers have always read them as complementary, as attested so elegantly by the advocates of the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians still today. But in fact their views were not seen as harmonious by the author of the second letter. He objected to an eschatology that insisted that Jesus was coming suddenly and unexpectedly, and in the imminent future, right away. 1 Thessalonians could

certainly be read as conveying just such a message, but the author could scarcely denigrate that letter, as it was widely known to have come from the apostle himself. Another letter was (allegedly? actually?) available, however, that made the point even more strenuously and disturbingly, and this other letter too claimed to be written by Paul. Or so the forger averred. It was to counter this false letter that he produced a false letter of his own. He countered a forgery by producing a forgery. This is the first known instance of a Christian counterforgery, in the strong sense.[30]

In order to make his handiwork more effective, the author employed several of the known tools of the forger's trade. He replicated the distinctive vocabulary and adopted key instances of the phrasing of an authentic letter, structuring his along similar lines, and addressing most of the same major issues. He provided clear instances of verisimilitude, including a borrowed instance of "remembrance" of the time he had allegedly spent among the congregation, in words taken from the earlier letter (2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Thess. 2:9). He warned his readers against a forgery circulating in his name (2:2), a ploy to be repeated by later Christian forgers. And at the end he did perhaps "protest too much": "The greeting is in my own hand, the hand of Paul, which is the sign in all my letters. This is how I write" (3:17). The first six words—ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου are precisely parallel to 1 Cor. *16:21*, and are matched still more famously by Gal. 6:11. But in neither of these instances is Paul's final signing off—after his amanuensis had penned his dictation—said to be a mark of authenticity. It may have been that; but in both other instances it may as well have been a way of personalizing the letter for his readers. If this was the way Paul always finished his letters, it is more than a little strange that he does not end all his letters this way, and stranger still that he never refers to the practice as a prophylaxis against forgery.[31] At the same time, it is an odd claim to make in a (Christian) culture where letters circulated more commonly in copies rather than autographs. Did Paul himself expect only his handwritten copy to be read among his churches? If not, then it is hard to understand how he could have imagined 3:17 would be a bona fide demonstration of authenticity. On the other hand, it makes sense for a forger to make the claim. It did, after all, prove effective in throwing readers off the scent of the author's deceit, even though none of these readers saw a single iota of Paul's actual handwriting. Moreover, it was a ploy used by other forgers of antiquity.[32]

COLOSSIANS

The letter to the Colossians is sometimes taken to be the earliest surviving Pauline pseudepigraphon, and thus the earliest Christian forgery of any kind.[33] But there is obviously no way to say for certain: we do not know who wrote the letter, to whom, or where. As a result, it is virtually impossible to establish its relative chronology in relation, say, to 2 Thessalonians. It is also difficult—again, well nigh impossible—to identify with any level of certainty the adversaries who are being opposed, although I will argue below that they are probably to be taken as real, not imaginary. What is most clear is that the author of the book is using Paul's authority to attack them. Moreover, in doing so, the author has been more or less compelled, given the nature of the false teaching, to embrace eschatological views that stand at odds with Paul's. As we will see, eschatology is not a peripheral issue in the letter. It constitutes one of its central features.

Views of Authorship

In 1838, Ernst Mayerhoff was the first to question the Pauline authorship of Colossians. In his view, the language and style of the letter were not sufficiently Pauline, certain terms were used in non-Pauline ways, the author attacked a heresy not found until after Paul's day, and the book derived much of its teaching from Ephesians.[34] Many of these issues have remained important parts of the conversation still today. In 1857, Heinrich Ewald was the first to argue that the differences from the Pauline letters were because the letter was penned by a Pauline associate, Timothy, a view that continues to have representatives among those who see the letter as basically Pauline but distinctive in greater or lesser ways.[35]

Despite its popularity, this latter view is completely implausible. Not only is Paul named first as the author of the letter in 1:1, on two other occasions, the author—presumably not Timothy!—speaks of himself as "I, Paul" (1:23, 4:18), once indicating that he has written the greeting in his own hand. Moreover, as we will see, the problems presented by the letter involve not just the style—a serious matter in this instance—but also the very substance of its teaching. As Lindemann has pointed out, even if, to stretch the imagination, one of Paul's colleagues wrote the letter (claiming to be the apostle: "I, Paul"), Paul himself would surely have signed off on the contents. Yet it is precisely the contents that dissociate the letter from Paul. And so, quite apart from the issues of secretaries and coauthors—to be addressed in the next chapter—attributing the letter to a close co-worker appears to be a counsel of despair.[36]

The closely related view that Colossians, and others of the Deutero-Pauline letters, were the product of a "Pauline School" can also probably be put to rest. The idea of a Pauline school was first put forth by Hans Conzelmann in his important essay "Paulus und die Weisheit," and has been much bandied about over the past half-century since.[37] Even though no consensus ever emerged on the nature of such a school or the time of its inception, the benefits of the hypothesis for questions of pseudepigraphic authorship have always been obvious: without maligning authors for committing forgery, scholars could argue that close associates of Paul, who discussed and studied his teachings, produced writings in his name with impunity, much as the disciples of great teachers did in the cognate philosophical schools of their environment.

That this reconstruction is contextually untenable should be clear from our earlier discussions. There in fact is no evidence that students produced pseudonymous writings in the names of their teachers with impunity in the philosophical schools of the first century (or before or after).[38] This could scarcely, then, have been the context for the production of Pauline pseudepigrapha. Moreover, the references to Pauline authorship in these letters is not casual—a matter of an inscription, for example. The Deutero-Pauline letters insist with some emphasis that Paul himself was the author (thus the "I, Paul" references of Colossians, and the signature "with my own hand"). Whoever wrote these books wanted their readers to think they really were Paul.

Even beyond the contextual problem, one needs to ask seriously whether it makes sense to speak of a Pauline school. For one thing, we would not be talking about "a" Pauline school, but of many Pauline schools. Paul's communities, even in his own day, were wide-ranging in outlook and perspective, with followers of Paul claiming widely disparate views on a surprisingly broad range of topics. Eventually Paul's authority would be claimed for divergent understandings of such fundamental matters as the unity of the Godhead, the nature of Christ, the character of the created order, the means of salvation, the status of the flesh, the reality of the resurrection, the role of women in the church, and numerous other theological, liturgical, and practical issues. What could it possibly mean to speak of "a" Pauline school? Even in one of his earliest letters, 1 Corinthians, the one group of followers who claimed Paul as their leader ("I am of Paul") are presented as supporting views that Paul himself opposed. And this is not to speak of all the other Corinthians who looked up to him and yet advanced positions he found abhorrent.

One could argue that there were lots of Pauline schools, in lots of places, that took lots of positions, some of them in continuity with Paul and others of them

not. But that in itself leads to the more fundamental question: Did Paul establish schools? We know that he started congregations. But schools? Did Paul establish places of learning, study, research, lecturing, and writing like the schools of antiquity? Where is the evidence of any such thing? Where does Paul ever mention, or even allude to, any such institution? It is fair enough to argue that the Deutero-Pauline letters evidence the oral transmission of Paul’s teachings and discussions. But this kind of ongoing reflection does not require a “school.” All it requires is a church. And that, of course, is what Paul does speak about, abundantly: churches, not schools. It is in the church context that proclamation, edification, and education took place.

Paul was no professional rhetorician, and nothing suggests that students were taking notes at his lectures. Moreover, Paul believed the end was near and that the Gentile mission needed to be pursued. Why form a school? One might imagine—many have—that “the” Pauline school emerged with the delay of the end, as the Pauline churches became more firmly entrenched in the world. But here again we are faced with the pluriform nature of Pauline Christianities and the disappointing fact that nothing in the first century of Christianity’s existence has any appearance of a philosophical school.

As a result, as helpful as the notion of a Pauline school may have once seemed to explain a product like the letter to the Colossians (or any of the other Deutero-Pauline epistles), the concept in the end is neither necessary nor even useful. To paraphrase Tertullian, “What has Athens to do with Colossae?”

This is not to deny that the letter to the Colossians bears strong resemblances to other literary products of the Pauline communities, especially Ephesians, and also to the writings of Paul himself. These similarities do not derive from comparable scholastic contexts, however. Instead, they suggest that here again we are dealing with an author who wanted his work to sound like Paul’s.

The closest ties of the letter are to the orthonymous Philemon. The data are well known. Paul is said to be a prisoner in both letters (Col. 4:3; Phlm. 1, 9–14); in both Timothy is named as the cosender (Col. 1:1; Phlm. 1) and Onesimus is referred to as being sent to the recipient(s) (Col. 4:9; Phlm. 12). Five of the six persons who send greetings to the Colossians also send greetings to Philemon (Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas; Col. 4:10–14; Phlm. 23, 24); and special appeal is made in each letter to Archippus, one of three individuals addressed in Philemon (Col. 4:17; Phlm. 2). The conclusion reached by Victor Paul Furnish seems inescapable: these books were either written by the same author (notice: the similarities are not of the sort we found in 2 Thessalonians in relation to its model), or Colossians is written by someone wanting to imitate

Paul with the letter of Philemon to hand.[39]

Evidence of Forgery

As with every instance of forgery, the case of Colossians is cumulative, involving multiple factors. None has proved more decisive over the past thirty years than the question of writing style. The case was made most effectively in 1973 by Walter Bujard, in a study both exhaustive and exhausting, widely thought to be unanswerable.[40]

Bujard compares the writing style of Colossians to the other Pauline letters, focusing especially on those of comparable length (Galatians, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians), and looking at an inordinately wide range of stylistic features: the use of conjunctions (of all kinds), infinitives, participles, relative clauses, repetitions of words and word groups, use of antithetical statements, parallel constructions, use of the preposition ἐν, the piling up of genitives, and on and on. In case after case, Colossians stands apart from Paul's letters.

Here I can mention a slim selection of his findings. How often does a book of Paul's use adversative conjunctions? Galatians 84 times; Philippians 52; 1 Thessalonians 29; but Colossians only 9. Causal conjunctions? Galatians 45 times; Philippians 20; 1 Thessalonians 31; but Colossians only 9. Consecutive conjunctions? Galatians 16 times; Philippians 10; 1 Thessalonians 12; but Colossians only 6. How often does the letter use a conjunction to introduce a statement (ὅτι, ὡς, πως etc.)? Galatians 20 times; Philippians 19; 1 Thessalonians 11; but Colossians only 3.

As a Fazit to part one, Bujard adds up conjunctions of all kind and indicates the percentage of their occurrence in relation to all words used: Galatians 239 (10.7 percent), Philippians 138 (8.5 percent), 1 Thessalonians 126 (8.5 percent), Philemon 28 (8.4 percent), but Colossians only 63 (4 percent). The average in all the undisputed letters is 10.4 percent; in Colossians it is 4 percent.

Bujard then uses another metric, adding up all the different conjunctions used in the Pauline letters: Galatians 33; Philippians 31; 1 Thessalonians 31; but Colossians only 21. But he goes further, subtracting from these totals the conjunctions that occur in all the letters in question (the shorter epistles: Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians), since these are simply common words, not words necessarily distinctive of Paul. One is then left with the following numbers: Galatians 24; Philippians 22; 1 Thessalonians 22; but Colossians only 12. He then goes a step farther, subtracting those that occur in all but one of the letters in question (these

are distinctive of Paul, not just common words). And the results remain consistent, if not more graphic: Galatians 20; Philippians 18; 1 Thessalonians 18; but Colossians only 8.

The findings involving conjunctions match those using other parts of speech. Bujard looks, for example, at the use of the infinitive. In Galatians the infinitive occurs 32 times (1.4 percent of all words), Philippians 39 (2.4 percent), 1 Thessalonians 48 (3.3 percent), but in Colossians only 11 (0.7 percent). The articular infinitive is used in Galatians 5 times, Philippians 16, 1 Thessalonians 13, but in Colossians never.

The same (or rather the inverse) results obtain with reference to the use of relative clauses. In Romans they make up 1.4 percent of all the words of the book, 1 Corinthians 0.9 percent, 2 Corinthians 1.0 percent, Galatians 1.5 percent, Philippians 1.5 percent, 1 Thessalonians 0.3 percent, Philemon 1.4 percent, but Colossians 2.6 percent.

Bujard goes on like this for a very long time, page after page, statistic after statistic. What is striking is that all these features point the same way. When one adds to these the other commonly noted (though related) features of the style of Colossians—the long complex sentences, the piling up of genitives, the sequences of similar sounding words, and so on—the conclusion can scarcely be denied. This book is not written in Paul's style.[41]

Arguments based on style are strongly supported by considerations of content. In several striking and significant ways the teaching of Colossians differs from the undisputed letters. Most commonly noted is the eschatological view, to which we will return later in our discussion. In 1:13 the author insists that God (already) "has delivered us from the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved son." Already? An aorist tense? Is this Paul? More striking still is 2:12–13, and 3:1, which insist that believers have already experienced a kind of spiritual resurrection after having died with Christ: "you were also raised [aorist] in him through faith"; God "made you alive with him"; "if then you have been raised up with Christ"—statements in clear tension with Paul's emphatic statements elsewhere, such as Rom. 6:1–6, where it is quite clear that, whereas those who have been baptized "have died" with Christ, they decidedly have not been "raised up" with him yet. This is an important point in Paul's theology, not a subsidiary matter. The resurrection is something future, something that is yet to happen. So too Phil. 3:11—"if somehow I *might* obtain to the resurrection from the dead." And yet more emphatically in 1 Cor. 15—"in Christ all *shall be* made alive … we *shall* all be changed … the dead *will be* raised." It can easily be argued that this is a key—if not the single key—to

understanding Paul’s opposition to the Corinthian enthusiasts. They believed they were leading some kind of spiritual, resurrected existence, and Paul insisted that it had not yet happened. They may have died with Christ, but they had not yet been raised with him. That will come only at the end.

And what does the author of Colossians think? Believers have not only died with Christ but they have also been raised with him. They are already leading a kind of glorious existence in the present. This is the view Paul argues against in Corinth. Maybe he changed his mind. But given the stylistic differences—and the other matters of content to be discussed—it seems unlikely. Colossians is written by someone who has provided a twist on a Pauline theme, moving it precisely in the direction Paul refused to go.[42]

There are other theological differences from Paul, frequently noted, all of them pointing in the same direction. A later author has taken up Pauline themes and shifted them in decidedly non-Pauline ways. Unlike Paul, this author understands redemption as the “forgiveness of sins” (1:14; as does Eph. 1:7). The phrase occurs nowhere else in the Pauline corpus; indeed, the term ἀφίημι itself, in the sense of “forgive sins,” is absent from Paul, except in the quotation of Ps. 32:1 in Rom. 4:7 (“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven”). So too, analogously, with a different term, 2:13 speaks of trespasses being forgiven: χαρισάμενος ἡμῖνπάντα τὰ παραπτώματα. Χαρίζομαι is never used this way in the undisputed Paulines.[43] So too 3:13 speaks of “forgiving one another just as the Lord has forgiven you,” using χαρίζομαι again.

This author speaks famously of “filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” for the sake of the church (1:24), a shocking image for Paul; were Christ’s sufferings in some way inadequate and needed to be completed? At the same time the author offers an exalted Christology (1:15–20), far beyond anything in the undisputed letters, even the Philippians hymn: Christ is the “image of the invisible God,” the “first born of creation,” “in him all things were created … and in him all things hold together,” “in him all the fullness was well pleased to dwell.” This is far closer to the Johannine prologue than Paul. As a result, in comparison with Paul, the author of Colossians seems to have a much higher view of Christ (1:15–20) and a much lower view of the efficacy of his death (1:24).

Other differences from Paul may not be as striking but bear noting as contributing to the overall sense of the letter. It seems very odd indeed to have “Paul” attack issues of Jewish legalism (sabbaths and festivals 2:16; “regulations” involving purity and kosher 2:20–21) without using Pauline vocabulary either to describe or attack it (“law,” “commandment,”

“justification”). This is not a case of simply expecting Paul always to speak the language of δικαιόω and its equivalents in all of his letters; in this case the author is dealing precisely with the issues of relevance to the terminology, but he does not use it. When the “law” does make an appearance—without being named—it is said to be a “shadow of things to come” (2:17), a teaching that resonates with the views of Hebrews, but not with Paul.

Given Paul’s ability to mix metaphor otherwise, possibly not too much weight should be placed on the fact that Christ here is described as the “head of the body” rather than the “body” itself (1:18), though the usage does give one pause.[44] When one considers, however, how Paul imagines the life “of the body” the differences are even more striking. The Haustafel of 3:18–4:1 has long been thought of as non-Pauline, and for reasons related to the realized eschatology already noted. In particular, this domestication of Paul in his embrace of family ideals stands at odds with Paul’s firmly stated preference, for himself and others, for celibacy. Nowhere in Paul’s letters do we find such a celebration of standard Greco-Roman ethics; on the contrary, Paul insisted on the superiority of the ascetic life free from marriage (1 Corinthians 7). This, indeed, was the appropriate response to a world that was in the process of “passing away.” Here in Colossians, on the other hand, the world is not passing away (there is no imminent crisis); it is here for the long haul, and so are the Christians who make up Christ’s body in it.[45] As a result, they need to adopt behavior appropriate for the long run. Relations to those living outside the community are especially important, not to inform them of the “impending crisis” but to maintain a proper upstanding relationship. In short, this is written by someone who knows the church has been here and will be here for the long run. There is no imminent expectation of the coming end.[46] On the basis of all these considerations,[47] it is clear that with Colossians we are not dealing with a letter of Paul, but a letter of someone wanting his readers to think he is Paul.[48]

The Function of the Forgery: The Question of the Opponents

No issue in the interpretation of Colossians has so exercised interpreters as the identity of the opponents attacked in the heart of the letter, 2:8–23. Nearly forty years ago now, John Gunther could cite forty-four scholarly opinions about who the false teachers were.[49] Two decades later, in one five-year stretch, four major studies appeared on the issue, each arguing a different view.[50]

The inability to determine the precise nature of the opposing teaching has led to three extremes among scholars. The most common is to identify the

opponents with some known, marginal group (the Essenes, Jewish Gnostics, devotees of the Mystery cults); another is to invent a group not otherwise known to exist by combining features of several that are known, creating an a historical amalgam that fits a theory of the opponents better than do the known facts of history (a Stocheia cult; Christians with Essene affinities); the third is to insist that since we do not know of any group that embodies the teachings intimated in the letter, no such group at all existed, and the author's opponents are imaginary.[51]

All these views appear to assume that if there were an actual group of false teachers under attack, we should have other evidence for its existence and thus should be able to name it. But why would that be so? The author is incensed by a group of Christians who deliver false teachings (2:8, 18, 20–21); we can know some of the things that they teach, but not everything. The author certainly would be under no obligation to spell out the nature of the "false teachings" for those of us interested two thousand years later. He sees them as a threat, but he clearly knows what he is referring to better than we ever can. That should give us no reason to despair and either wildly name them or claim that they must not have existed.

The latter claim was made most poignantly by Morna Hooker in a now-famous article.[52] In her view, if the opponents were a real problem, the author, on one hand, would have provided more information about their views and, on the other, would have engaged in a more heated refutation, much as one finds in the letter to the Galatians. The second point is moot. The way Paul dealt with one set of problems in one set of circumstances has no bearing on how a different author—not Paul—would have dealt with another situation. As to the first point, one should always be loath to stipulate how polemicists should go about their business, and there is, as Alice reminds us, no accounting for tastes. This does not mean that we should be able to identify the opponents with an otherwise known group. Earliest Christianity was far more diversified than most of us have ever dared imagine, and local views could run the gamut of almost infinite variety.

In broad terms, the opponents appear to promote the worship of lower beings of the cosmic order–the famous but difficult-to-identify στοιχεῖα—either instead of, or more likely in addition to, Christ (2:8). The parallel in v. 18, which sums up the dual problematic of the opponents, suggests that these στοιχεῖα were conceived of as angelic beings, that is, lower divine entities on the celestial scale, far below the Christ celebrated in chapter 1 as he in whom the "fullness" of the divine completely dwells. The language of "disarming" in 2:15 may

suggest that these lower beings were, in the author's view—though obviously not in the opponents'—insidious, not beneficent, beings. If so, the argument compares favorably to later forms of Christian polemic that maligned others for worshiping divine beings that were in fact demons.

This undue worship of inferior divine beings is accompanied by religious practices and scruples that may have been borrowed from Jewish cult: observance of special days such as Sabbath, festivals, new moons; purity concerns ("do not handle … do not touch"; 2:21); and dietary laws ("do not taste"). For the author, these ritual guidelines may give the "appearance of wisdom," in promoting sacred ascetic lifestyles in service of the divine, but in fact are of no use in the ultimate concerns of the believer, to check (real) fleshly indulgence (2:23).

The entire system proposed by those who threaten the readers with this false worship and pointless religious practices is summed up as "philosophy and empty deceit" (2:8). This deceit is obviously not the true worship that is available to believers in Christ. Contrary to what scholars sometimes assert, the threat posed by this alternative religiosity is internal, a threat to those who are already part of the body of Christ. It is not an invitation to deconvert and join some other religion (Jewish or pagan). That is to say, it is a challenge to become a different kind of Christian—although the author himself may have considered the "false teachers" as not Christian at all, as typically happened among polemicists standing in the proto-orthodox tradition. The opponents, though, appear to have seen their prescribed worship as important elements of their Christian tradition, not as non-Christian pagan or Jewish cult.

The author's response to these unnecessary add-ons to what he takes to be the "true" worship of Christ is, as widely recognized, already adumbrated in the celebrated Christ hymn of chapter 1, which is used to set up his direct refutation of chapter 2. It is precisely because Christ is the "image of the invisible God, the first born of the entire creation" that he alone is to be worshiped. The στοιχεῖα are among the things that were created in him: "all things were created through him and for him." Moreover, he is "before all things." He alone is "pre-eminent" and in him "all the fullness is pleased to dwell." The link between the hymn and the polemic is clearly made through the connections of 1:19 at the end of the first passage (ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι) and its loose reiteration in the second ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς; 2:9). And so the issue in the controversy has to do with the adequacy of Christ. For this author, he is the embodiment of the fullness of divinity itself. He alone should be worshiped. There is no need for worship of lower beings of any sort, however

powerful or important. And no need of secondary ascetic practices. Christ is all that one needs. Adding anything to the worship of Christ is empty deceit, merely human "philosophy," pointless and unnecessary religious exercise, and even, he suggests, the worship of malevolent beings.

In no small measure, the purpose of the letter, then, is to stress that believers who have been baptized into Christ already have complete access to him and the benefits that he conveys. They have no need of other divine beings or other religious activities. This is where the eschatology of the letter becomes crucial. For this author, those who have been baptized have not only died with Christ (as in Paul). They have already been delivered "from the authority of darkness and transferred … into the kingdom of his beloved son" (1:13). They have, that is, already experienced a spiritual resurrection. "You were also raised [aorist] in him through faith"; God "made you alive with him"; "you have been raised up with Christ."

In other words, precisely the theological feature of the letter that suggests it was not written by the Paul of the undisputed letters (the realized eschatology) is the feature that figures most prominently in its exposition of the superiority of the Christian faith, the central tenet of the letter. The non-Pauline eschatology is not a subsidiary matter tacked onto a letter dealing with other things; it is the centerpiece of the letter and the key to understanding its polemic. For this author, the believer's resurrection is a past, realized, spiritual event.[53]

Colossians then may be considered a counterforgery in the weaker sense, in that it attacks a distinct—if hard to localize and identify—set of opponents representing an aberrant view. Here a later forger puts a non-Pauline (or anti-Pauline) eschatological view on Paul's pen in order to oppose "false teachers" who do not appreciate the full extent of the salvation Christ has brought. The letter did not need, of course, actually to have been sent to Colossae, whether or not the town still existed at the time.[54] As Standhartinger indicates, the specific address to Colossians in fact seems at odds with the universal tendency of the letter (1:6, 1:23, 1:28, 2:1, 4:16). As a result, she may be right that the letter was (pseudonymously) directed there for symbolic value. Colossae was a remote, little known place; this embrace of the fullness of the divinity in bodily form reaches into the very remote corners of the empire.[55]

EPHESIANS

I will deal with the letter to the Ephesians in somewhat less detail because it is less ostensibly polemical, in any traditional sense: it is not obviously directed

against a group of enemies. But the letter does take non-Pauline eschatology even farther than Colossians, and at least one recent interpreter has seen it as an attempt to correct an important aspect of its predecessor. To that extent it can be seen, at least subtly, as polemical.

That the writing style of Ephesians stands out within the traditional Pauline corpus was seen already by Erasmus: “Certainly the style is so different from several of Paul’s letters, that it might seem to be by another, were it not for the fact that the spirit and nature of the Pauline mind altogether vindicate it” (Certe stilus tantum dissonat a ceteris Pauli epistolis, ut alterius videri possit, nisi pectus atque indoles Paulinae mentis hanc prorsus illi vindicarent).[56] Evanson in 1792, and then Usteri in 1824, both maintained that its impersonal character and close proximity to Colossians made it suspect. But W. M. L. de Wette was the first to formulate the full argument against its genuineness in his *Einleitung* of 1826, an argument repeated in his commentary of 1843. In de Wette’s view, the letter contains much that is “foreign to the apostle … or not worthy of him in its mode of writing and thought.”[57]

A key contribution to the modern study was C. L. Mitton’s 1951 analysis,[58] which laid out, in considerable detail, a wealth of arguments based on linguistics, style, literary dependence, historical circumstances, and doctrine. His demonstration against authenticity was not at all compromised by his adoption of the well-known but now discredited Goodspeed-Knox theory that the letter was originally designed as a “cover letter” for the *Corpus Paulinum*. Among the letters discussed so far, Ephesians is the most widely acknowledged to be pseudepigraphic among critical scholars, including such recent commentators as Sellin.[59]

As so often happens, the arguments against authenticity are at times far from compelling. It is widely pointed out, for example, that there is a lack of a concrete Sitz im Leben for the letter; no clear characterization of the recipients, who appear to be known only by hearsay; and no obvious situation to which the letter is addressed. But this scarcely speaks against Pauline authorship: there is no reason to think that Paul was constrained to write only one kind of occasional letter throughout his career. Was Paul for some reason not allowed to write a circular letter if he so chose? So too, it is often pointed out that the author himself is portrayed in rather colorless terms. But here as well, one might suspect that if Paul were to write another kind of letter from the seven about which we have detailed information, he may well have stood in relationship to it in a different way.

There are, nonetheless, compelling reasons for thinking that Paul did not in

fact write the letter. The first and most obvious involves its relationship to Colossians, on which it appears to be patterned. If Colossians was forged—as it almost certainly was—there can be no thought of Paul himself imitating it in another piece of correspondence. Scholars evaluate the proximity of the two letters in various ways. Mitton's famous claim is that a third of the words in Colossians reappear in Ephesians. Lincoln gives more precise, though completely confirmatory, statistics: of 1,570 words in Colossians, 34 percent appear in Ephesians; of 2,411 words in Ephesians, 26.5 percent are in Colossians.[60] Hüneburg is somewhat more circumspect, recognizing that a good deal depends on how one counts the words found in parallel passages; by his tally somewhere between 26.5 percent and 50 percent of the words of Ephesians can be found in Colossians.[61]

These kinds of bare statistics are scarcely probative; what matters are the individual instances. The passage that leaves no doubt is Eph. 6:21–22, which repeats an entire twenty-nine words from Col. 4:7–8 (leaving out just two words). Obviously this kind of parallel is impossible without one author copying another. Lincoln points out that there are three other passages that have seven words in common; these alone show that there must be a literary relationship between the letters (Eph. 1:1–2 and Col. 1:1–2; Eph. 3:2 and Col. 1:25; Eph. 3:9 and Col. 1:26); in two other passages five consecutive words are found (Eph. 1:7 and Col. 1:14; Eph. 4:16 and Col. 2:19).[62]

As might be expected, various solutions to the obvious literary ties of the two writings have been proposed throughout the history of the discussion. Mayerhoff in 1838 maintained that Ephesians is authentic and that Colossians was a secondary reworking of it by a later writer. De Wette in 1843 took the opposite side: Colossians is authentic and Ephesians was an imitation. Holtzmann in 1872 declared that both books, in their surviving form, are inauthentic: Colossians was based on an authentic Pauline letter, which had been used as the basis for a later author to create Ephesians, which in turn was used to create what is now Colossians. The majority of scholars today—despite the protests of E. Best—side with the priority of Colossians.[63] The most recent case has been made by Leppä: a number of the parallel passages in Ephesians appear to be elaborations of Colossians (Eph. 2:1–10 of Col. 2:12–13; Eph. 5:21–33 of Col. 3:18–19) and some passages of Ephesians appear to be conflations of disparate statements of Colossians (Eph. 1:7, cf. Col. 1:14, 20; Eph. 1:15–16, cf. Col. 1:4 and 1:9; Eph. 2:1–5, cf. Col. 2:13; 3:16; etc.).[64]

If this view is right, Ephesians was obviously forged, since Colossians, on which it was based, was forged. Confirmation comes in a range of arguments

involving style, vocabulary, structure, and content. The stylistic considerations that led Schmidt to claim that 2 Thessalonians was non-Pauline speak with equal elegance for Ephesians—as well as for Colossians, in a case that is fully confirmed and ratified by Bujard's earlier but more extensive analysis. Unfortunately, nothing of Bujardian proportions exists for Ephesians, although it is frequently observed that the style is not Pauline, with its love of long and awkward sentences (1:3–14; 1:15–23; 2:1–7 with anacolouthon; 3:8–12; 3:14–19; 4:11–16; etc.), its strings of participles (1:13; 2:12; 2:14–16), strings of infinitives (3:16–18; 4:22–24); and repetitions of prepositions (1:3ff.; 4:12–13). Again, the question is not whether Paul was capable of writing in this way, but simply of whether he did. With respect to the long and complex sentences, one frequently cited statistic is that of Morton and McLeman, who pointed out that nine out of a hundred sentences in the book comprise more than fifty words.[65] This stands in sharp contrast with passages of approximately equal length in Paul, for example, Romans 1–4, which has just three out of 581 sentences over fifty words; 1 Corinthians 1–4, which has one of 621 sentences; 2 Corinthians 1–3, with two of 334 sentences; Galatians, with one of 181 sentences; Philippians, with one of 102 sentences; 1 Thessalonians, with one of 81 sentences. Paul could obviously write long sentences. But it was not his characteristic style. One can only marvel at a supporter of authenticity like M. Barth, who suggests that "Paul himself is the man who could best afford to write in a non-Paulinistic way."[66] Whether here a secretary (or coauthor) hypothesis can best explain these stylistic data will be an issue addressed in an excursus in the next chapter.

Pointing in the same direction of style is the structure of the letter, which looks, at first glance, roughly Pauline, but is distinctive within the canonical corpus in containing both a blessing (1:3–14) and a thanksgiving (1:15–23). The word usage points in the same direction, in view of its occasional distinctiveness, although this is obviously not compelling in se. Still, as frequently noted, this author prefers the phrase "in the heavens" to Paul's "in heaven" (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12), refers to the "Devil" instead of Paul's "Satan" (4:27, 6:11),[67] and uses the non-Pauline phrase "good works" (2:10). The final point—possibly the others as well—indicates a larger problem than mere linguistic preference. This author has a perspective that in many places may sound like Paul but in fact stands at odds with him, a matter to which we will turn momentarily.

Before doing so, it is important to stress more generally the strongest argument against the Pauline authorship of the letter, its non-Pauline contents. As different as Colossians is from Paul himself, Ephesians is more so, often in the same ways. There continues to be some element of eschatological reserve

here, although not as much as Colossians. Thus, for example, the Spirit is the “down payment of our inheritance until we acquire it” (1:14) and it is in “the coming ages” (2:7) that believers will receive “the immeasurable riches of his grace”; moreover, the wrath of God is still “coming” (5:6). Nonetheless, the real significance of the resurrection of the dead is that it is a spiritual event that has happened (in the past) to believers, who are already enjoying the benefits of a raised existence. Even more than Colossians, this realized eschatology stands in sharp tension with Paul’s carefully developed views in Romans 6, Philippians 3, and 1 Corinthians 15. Just as Christ himself has been “raised … from the dead and made to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above every authority, power, and dominion” (1:20–21), so too the believers have also already been “made alive” (1:4), indeed, “made alive together with Christ …. and raised … up with him and made … to sit with him in the heavenly places” (2:5–6). The exalted character of Christ who now rules over all the evil forces of this world is shared by the believers who have been raised with him and so likewise rule in the heavenly places. Believers are not even said, as in Paul, to have “died” to sin and the powers of the world; for this author, they *once* were dead, before coming to life in Christ; but now they are no longer subject to the powers and forces of the world.[68]

This is not the only material difference between Paul and the letter to the Ephesians. Like its model, Colossians, Ephesians too speaks of redemption in the un-Pauline way of ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων (1:7; cf. Col. 1:14); it too conceptualizes Christ as the head of the body, not the body (1:22–23 and especially 4:15–16, which sounds very much like Colossians—see Col. 1:18 and 2:19); it too, presents a Haustafel that appears to stand at odds with Paul’s radical social ethic and endorsement of celibacy, and much more like the bourgeois ethic that the Christian church had begun to adopt once it recognized that it needed to “settle down” into life in the Roman world—a reconfirmation of the lack of eschatological urgency so characteristic of the authentic Paul.

Other statements of the letter are even more difficult to imagine as coming from the pen of Paul, including the claim—key to the teaching of the letter—that Christ had somehow “abolished the law of the commandments” by his death (2:15). Paul himself, with one of his characteristic emphatic declarations (μὴ γένοιτο!), insists that he does not believe the Law has been abolished; on the contrary, for him it is established in Christ (Rom. 3:31; cf., e.g., Gal. 6:2).

More than anywhere else, the key passage of Eph. 2:1–10 provides individual statements that seem, on the surface, to carry Pauline resonances, yet reveal themselves upon closer reflection to be strongly non-Pauline. The salvific

pattern set forth here is often touted as vintage Paul: believers who were dead in their sins and alienated from God are made alive only by God's own gracious act in Christ, to be received by faith, not by "works," so that there is now no ground for boasting. Once the patina of Pauline phrases is scratched, however, the alien character of the passage is clearly shown. The historical Paul insisted in his own letters that before coming to Christ he was completely "blameless" with respect to the "righteousness that is in the Law" (Phil. 3:6). How could he now turn and say that he, like the pagans around him, followed "the passions of the flesh, the desires of body and mind?" Some such view may come from a misreading of Romans 7, but not from the pen of Paul talking about his own past. How could Paul, who insisted that believers "will be raised" with Christ, with an emphasis on the future state, declare that believers have already been raised and are in fact currently "seated in the heavenly places" with Christ, in a position of rule and authority removed from the evil forces of this world? How could Paul refer to the act of salvation as a completed event ("you have been saved") when for Paul salvation was an event to be eagerly expected, yet to come?[69]

Most important, in a letter dealing principally with the relation of Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ, how could the historical Paul speak of being saved by faith, and not by "good works"? Good works? Of course, Paul himself had no qualms about good deeds or the people who performed them; nor, obviously, did this author (2:8–10). But what has that to do with the Pauline view of justification? Paul's concern, especially in contexts of soteriology and the relationship of Jew and Gentile, was entirely with works "of the Law." Paul's own insistence that Gentiles do not need to keep the "works" of Jewish Law has somehow become transmuted into a claim that no one can be "good enough" to merit salvation. For Paul the issue was not moral probity; it was Jewish Law. This author has either very much misunderstood Paul's language or has rewritten it for a new situation, in which the words may sound similar but in fact mean something very different.

That the author was living after Paul is suggested by statements that may represent unintentional slips. And so, for example, in 2:20, the author speaks of the "apostles" as a founding group for the church, without any recognition that Paul himself was one of the constituent members of the group. Moreover, for Paul, Christ is not the "cornerstone" of the church: Christ himself (not the prophets and apostles") is the foundation (1 Cor. 3:11). Finally, and yet more striking, this author indicates that the central teaching of the gospel, that the Gentiles are to be joint heirs in the body of Christ with Jews, was "revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). But is he not missing

something rather crucial? Paul thought that he himself was the one to whom this insight was supremely revealed. He was the apostle to the Gentiles, and he was the one who had to convince others.

There are, in short, numerous imponderable difficulties in thinking the letter to the Ephesians authentic. At the same time, one of the other striking features of the book is the lengths to which the author goes in order to make the letter sound like Paul's—in fact, to insist to his readers that he really is Paul. Obviously he names himself in 1:1 (no coauthor here), and uses a Pauline letter opening (1:1–2). The structure of the letter is, for the most part, Pauline (with the one key exception mentioned above) and it uses dozens of "Pauline sounding" words, phrases, and ideas. Apart from that, the author makes an inordinate number of self-references: "I Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles" (3:1); "You have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God given me" (3:2); "how the mystery was made known to me by a revelation" (3:3); and "my understanding of the mystery" (3:4). He declares: "I was made a minister of this gospel … by the grace of God given to me" (3:7). He refers to himself as "the very least of all the saints" but claims that "grace was given [to me] to preach to the Gentiles" (3:8). He speaks of "my afflictions on your behalf" (3:13). He indicates that "I bow my knees before the Father" (3:14) and that "I [am] a prisoner of the Lord" (4:1). In the closing he asks his readers to "Pray … for me that a word might be given me" (6:19); he indicates that "I am an ambassador in chains … that I might declare it boldly" (6:20); he states that his readers may now "know how I am and what I am doing" (6:21); and he lets them know that "I have sent him [Tychicus] to you" (6:22).

How can a commentator like E. Best claim that this author was not trying to deceive his readers into thinking that he was actually Paul?[70] The author repeatedly goes out of his way to claim he was Paul. But he was not Paul. He was a follower of Paul, urging a non-Pauline set of theological views, writing later. Critics at the time would have labeled the book a νόθον or a ψεῦδος—creating an obvious irony, given the stress on the importance of "truth" found throughout the book (1:13; 4:15, 21; 5:9). Particularly piquant are 4:25 ("let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor") and 6:14 ("gird your loins with truth"), given the circumstances of the writing. Other critics have more sophisticated suggestions to absolve the author of his (from an ancient perspective) moral dilemma, but they too often appear to involve special pleading.[71]

The Polemics of the Letter

The Letter to the Ephesians may seem less germane to the focus of this study than other texts we will be examining. Its purposes are not ostensibly polemical and there is no clear-cut opponent described in its exposition. It is principally a celebration of Christian “unity”: the unity of Jew and Gentile together in the body of Christ as the “mystery” that has been revealed (esp. 2:11–21) and the unity of both with God through the redemptive work of Christ (2:1–10). The paranetic section too stresses the importance of unity both in the Spirit (4:2–6) and in society (the Haustafel of 5:21–6:9, along with other exhortations). There are, course, many other themes and subthemes, a good deal of paranesis, and an attempt to “correct” views that the author finds inadequate (possibly, e.g., Gentile “boasting”). But polemic does not seem to be the dominant feature of the letter.

At the same time, even though “false teaching” is not the principal concern, it is—as with Colossians—an ongoing issue, as evidenced especially in the second half of the letter, as the readers are urged not to be carried away “with every wind of teaching by the cunning of others, by their craftiness in their wiles of deceit” (4:14); they are to “put away every lie” (4:25); they are to make sure that no one “deceive” them “with empty words”; and they are to gird their loins with truth (6:14). There is thus some concern about false teaching and wrong instruction, even if the content of the error is never brought to the level of expression. It is possible, obviously, that these exhortations are simply traditional language, in a letter that is more concerned with urging a unity in the body and to encourage its readers in their lives together.

There may be a case to be made, however, that the letter engages in a far subtler kind of polemic, as recently argued in an interesting article by Martin Hüneburg.[72] Hüneburg points out that despite the fact that Ephesians was modeled on Colossians and contains, as a result, many of its salient themes, it differs in a significant respect that may suggest the author was not simply writing a letter for purposes of his own, but was trying to correct a misdirection being taken by its model. In particular Hüneburg notes that unlike its model, Ephesians makes explicit appeal to the Jewish scriptures in the context of its exhortations. When one reads Colossians carefully, in fact, without the blinders provided by the rest of the Pauline corpus, there is nothing to suggest that the exalted status of believers and the full benefits of salvation that they now enjoy are closely tied to anything like a “history of salvation.”

The historical Israel appears to be absent from Colossians, unlike Ephesians, where the historical people of Israel, and their Scriptures, figure prominently. In Ephesians, the body of Christ represents a reconciliation between “the

commonwealth of Israel" with "you Gentiles in the flesh." A new circumcision has been provided; an alienation has been overcome; those who were "strangers to the promise" have now been brought into the fold through the blood of Christ, which has created "one new person in place of the two." The stress on the historical connections between the body of Christ and the people of Israel in the opening exposition of Ephesians, especially of chapter 2, is matched by an appeal (also absent from its model) to the Jewish Scriptures throughout the paranetic section (e.g., 4:8, 25; 5:31; 6:2–3).

It is completely plausible that among the concerns of the author of Ephesians was the ahistorical view of salvation presented by his model, where the act of salvation brought by Christ received through the new existence effected in baptism had lost its roots in the history of salvation to Israel as related in the Scriptures. Colossians is in danger of moving into the direction of salvation without a history of salvation. But not Ephesians. Here the Gentiles have joined the commonwealth of Israel and been made heirs of the promise, all as part of God's mysterious plan (not a new thing) for the salvation of the world.[73]

In short, Colossians was not merely a text to be imitated or a kind of Vorlage of Ephesians. It was a "Pauline" book that needed to be corrected and brought back into line. There is no "correction formula" here as one finds in 2 Thess. 2:2, possibly because the author of Ephesians saw Colossians as authentically, but dangerously, Pauline. He created a further close connection to his model through his reference to Tychicus in 6:21. But he extended its message by making the apostle now explain the economy of the salvation of Gentiles—the resurrected existence now already enjoyed by those who have been baptized into Christ—with reference to the larger salvation history of the people of God. If this view of the author's concerns is right, then Ephesians can be seen as a kind of counterforgery, intending to correct the views of its predecessor—or at least the implications of those views—in the name of an apostle who in fact did not write either work.[74]

1. Standhartinger and others have claimed that Colossians should be seen as our earliest Christian forgery, but there is really no way to date its appearance precisely, or even in relation to, say, 2 Thessalonians. See Angela Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* ("Leiden: Brill, 1999), ch. 2.

2. On whether forgeries in Paul's name could appear in his lifetime—an issue about which there really should be no debate—see p. 82.

3. J. E. Chr. Schmidt, "Vermutungen über die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher," in *Bibliothek für Kritik und Exegese des Neuen Testaments und*

älteste Christengeschichte, vol. 2, fasc. 3 (Hadamar: In der neuen Gelehrten-Buchhandlung, 1801, pp. 383–84); the essay can be found in Wolfgang Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum 2. Thessalonicher* (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1972), pp. 159–61.

4. "In jedem Falle bleibt es rätselhaft, warum er in dem Briefe die Erscheinung Christi als nahe beschrieb, in dem andern aber davor warnte, sie nicht als nahe zu erwarten." As given in Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, p. 160.

5. "Der Ankläger ist oft selbst der Schuldige, und klagt nur, um den Verdacht von sich abzuwälzen."

6. A. Hilgenfeld, "Die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher,' *ZWT* 5 (1862): 225–64.

7. H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Neuen Testament*, 3rd ed. (Freiburg: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1892), pp. 213–16.

8. *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 364.

9. W. Wrede, *Die Echtheit des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefs*. TU n.s. 9.2 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1903); Edgar Krentz, "A Stone That Will Not Fit: The Non-Pauline Authorship of Second Thessalonians," in J. Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 439–70. For a pithier statement, see Edgar Krentz, "Thessalonians, First and Second Epistles to the," *ABD* VI, 517–23 (on 2 Thess). For another, fuller overview, see John A. Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" *NTS* 25 (1979): 131–45.

10. Malherbe stresses that there are more differences than similarities between the two letters. That is certainly true—how could it not be?—but it is of no relevance to the question of whether a forgery (as opposed to Paul himself) made use of the first letter. He was under no obligation to replicate the letter in full. See Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* AB 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), pp. 356–58.

11. Not even in closely related passages such as Rom. 8:14–17 and Gal. 4:1–7.

12. For a basic overview of the parallel structures, see Bailey, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" p. 133.

13. Ibid., p. 134.

14. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 11.

15. See pp. 218–22.

16. Darryl Schmidt, "The Syntactical Style of 2 Thessalonians: How Pauline Is It?" in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Raymond F. Collins (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), pp. 383–93.

7. The issue is debated, of course, throughout the commentaries.

8. Among important discussions arguing for an “imminent” eschatology for 2 Thess 2:2, see Andreas Lindemann, “Zum Abfassungszweck des Zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes,” *ZNW* 68 (1977): 35–47; and especially A. M. G. Stephenson, “On the Meaning of ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου in 2 Thessalonians 2,2,” in *SE* 4, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), pp. 442–51.

9. See the revival of the theory in T. W. Manson, “St Paul in Greece,” *BJRL* 35 (1952–53): 428–47.

0. See the references and refutation of Bailey, “Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?” pp. 136–37, 140–41.

1. See the discussion of Wrede in Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 6.

2. Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 10.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

4. Among the better exegetical discussions, Eve-Marie Becker, “Ὡς δι᾽ ἡμῶν in 2 Thess 2.2 als Hinweis auf einen verlorenen Brief,” *NTS* 55 (2009): 55–72 opts for the first option—that the phrase applies to “spirit, word, and letter”—whereas Glenn S. Holland, “‘A Letter Supposedly from Us’: A Contribution to the Discussion about the Authorship of 2 Thessalonians,” in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Raymond F. Collins (Leuven: Peters, 1990), pp. 394–402, opts for the second.

5. Hanna Roose, “‘A Letter as by Us’: Intentional Ambiguity in 2 Thessalonians 2.2,” *JSNT* 29 (2006): 107–24.

6. Andreas Lindemann, “Zum Abfassungszweck.”

7. “Der 2. Thess. muss als der in Wahrheit erste Brief des Paulus an die Thessalonicher angesehen werden. Es ist der allein echte Paulus-Brief. … Der Verfasser des 2. Thess. will mit seinem Schreiben den 1 Thess. verdrängen.” “Der Verfasser des 2. Thess. [will] mit seinem Schreiben den 1. Thess. ersetzen.” Willi Marxsen, *Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1982), pp. 35, 80.

8. Eve-Marie Becker, “Ὡς δι᾽ ἡμῶν.”

9. The phrase is used explicitly of 2 Thessalonians recently by Hanna Roose, in reliance on Eckhart Reinmuth, “Die Briefe an die Thessalonicher,” in N. Walter, E. Reinmuth, and P. Lampe, eds., *Die Briefe an die Philipper, Thessalonicher und an Philemon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 105–204. For the concept more broadly see, e.g., Annette Merz, “The Fictitious Self-Exposition of Paul: How Might Intertextual Theory Suggest a Reformulation of the Hermeneutics of Pseudepigraphy?” in *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas L. Brodie *et al.* (Sheffield:

Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 113–32; and her earlier dissertation, *Die fiktive Selbstauslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen/Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/Academic Press, 2004).

0. It will be seen that I am not here taking the position of Frank Hughes, who sees 2 Thessalonians as a counterforgery to the eschatological views of Colossians and Ephesians. Those views involve an immanent/realized eschatology, not an imminent (or sudden) eschatology. See Frank Witt Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians* (JSNTSSup 30, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

1. Jewett maintains, on the contrary, that the statement of 3:17 would be a "risky method of supporting the acceptance of the forger" since it would call "into question the authenticity of every Pauline letter not bearing the 'mark' of Paul's signature at the end" (p. 6). There is no reason to think, however, that this author was overly concerned about the authenticity of Paul's other letters. Why would he care whether, say, Ephesians was accepted as authentic?

2. See Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung*, pp. 57–58.

3. For example, Angela Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). The most recent representative of this view is Nicole Frank, "Der Kolosserbrief und die 'Philosophia': Pseudepigraphie als Spiegel frühchristlicher Auseinandersetzungen um die Auslegung des paulinischen Erbes," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 411–32.

4. E. T. Mayerhoff, *Der Brief an die Colosser mit vornehmlicher Berücksichtigung der drei Pastoralbriefe*, ed. J. L. Mayerhoff (Berlin: Hermann Schültz, 1838).

5. Heinrich Ewald, *Die Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus* (Göttingen: Dieterisch, 1857). In recent times, the position has been taken by James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996).

6. For a list of scholars holding the various views of authenticity, inauthenticity, and composition by a co-worker, see of Outi Leppã, *The Making of Colossians: A Study on the Formation and Purpose of a Deutero-Pauline Letter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), pp. 9–15.

7. *NTS* 12 (1965–66): pp. 231–44. The fullest recent assessment is Thomas Schmeller, *Schulen im Neuen Testament? Zur Stellung des Urchristentums in der Bildungswelt seiner Zeit* (Freiburg: Herder, 2001). For opposition to traditionally understood Pauline schools, see Peter Müller, *Anfänge der Paulusschule:*

Dargestellt am zweiten Thessalonicherbrief und am Kolosserbrief, ATANT, 74 (Zurich: Theologische Verlag, 1988); and more recently Standhartinger, *Studien*, pp. 3ff. Still more recently Standhartinger appears to give back a good deal of ground: Angela Standhartinger, “Colossians and the Pauline School,” *NTS* 50 (2004): 572–93, where she speaks of an *opinio communis* that the Deutero Paulines were “products of the School of Paul.”

See pp. 105–19.

“Colossians, Epistle to the,” ABD, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1.1090–96. E. P. Sanders (“Literary Dependence in Colossians,” *JBL* 85, 1966, 28–45) went further and argued that Colossians 1–3 shows evidence of material that had possibly been collected from a range of Pauline letters: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians and 1 Thessalonians. Leppä (*Making of Colossians*) has more recently argued that Sanders was right but that he did not go far enough; Colossians used all seven undisputed letters, and not just in the first three chapters. If he is correct, we would have a clear argument for the letter being forged by someone borrowing material from Paul’s own work. Others, however, such as Standhartinger (*Studien*), are probably right that at the end of the day, there is simply not enough verbatim agreement to make the case. But as it turns out, this is not the strongest argument for forgery in any event.

Walter Bujard, *Stilanalytische Untersuchungen zum Kolosserbrief: als Beitrag zur Methodik von Sprachvergleichen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973).

Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke make the remarkable argument that since Col. 1:1–2 and 4:18 differ so widely from Paul’s epistolary style, they cannot be forged, as a forger would be sure to follow the style, whereas Paul was free to depart from it (*Colossians* AB 34B, New York: Doubleday, 1994, p. 121). Once again, Neutestamentlers would be well served to learn more about the practices of ancient forgery.

It is true that there is still some eschatological reserve in Colossians, as often noted: 1:5 (“the hope laid up for you in heaven”), 1:27 (Christ is “the hope of glory”), 3:4 (“when Christ appears”), 3:6 (“the wrath of God is coming”). But these more traditional Pauline notions have been set in a broader context that is completely non-Pauline—indeed, anti-Pauline. This author maintains that believers have already been spiritually raised with Christ, a view that Paul takes care to argue against elsewhere.

The term otherwise occurs eleven times in Paul, never in reference to God forgiving sins: Rom. 8:32; 1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Cor. 2:7, 10 [tris]; 12:13; Gal. 3:18;

Phil. 1:29; 2:9; Phlm. 22.

4. Pervo has made the most recent argument that the shift of the image is significant for the authorship of the letter: *Making of Paul*, p. 67.

5. On the book’s eschatological reserve, see note 42.

6. One other oddity of Colossians has sometimes been noted. In Paul’s own letters he states unequivocally his unwillingness to “preach the Gospel” in a church founded by someone else (Rom. 15:20; see 2 Cor. 10:13–16; Gal. 2:9), because he does not want to build on someone else’s foundation. Yet if Colossians is authentic, that appears to be exactly what he is doing here (unless Paul simply meant he was unwilling to visit someone else’s church in the flesh). In any event, the Epaphras who is named here as one who established the community in Colossae (1:7) is said to be a fellow prisoner of Paul in Philemon (Phlm. 23). Has the author taken a known character and made him the founder of the church? Nothing in Philemon connects him either with the founding of the church in Onesimus’ house or with Colossae.

7. It is sometimes pointed out that the earthquake that allegedly destroyed Colossae in 61 CE should have some bearing on the question of the authenticity of the letter—either that it must have been written before the earthquake (by Paul) or afterward by a forger, once the community had a chance to recover. Both views assume the letter was actually sent to Colossae. But if it is forged, there is absolutely no reason to think that it was. Moreover, recent scholars such as Standhartinger have given good reason for doubting that the town was ever destroyed by earthquake. Standhartinger, *Studien*, pp. 12–13.

8. The lengths to which some New Testament commentators will go to absolve the author of any intent to deceive can be seen in the recent comments of R. McL. Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon* (London: T&T Clark, 2005):

> The evidence from the ancient world makes it necessary to distinguish between dishonest forgery, undertaken for nefarious and malicious ends, and what might be described, paradoxical as it may appear, as “honest forgery” (p. 11). … It should be emphasized once again that the last option [that Colossians was not written by Paul] does not necessarily carry with it the stigma of fraud or forgery. That might apply in the case of a work written to propound some heretical doctrine, and as noted above many such works were later to be stigmatized as apocryphal or heretical, and therefore rejected. In the case of New Testament pseudepigrapha, however, the situation is somewhat different: these works came to be recognized by the Church as valid and

authentic witnesses to the genuine Christian faith. … They witness to what the Church believed. (p. 31)

In this view, an "honest forgery" is one that supports the views that eventually became dominant within Christian orthodoxy. The dishonest forger, then, is one who had the misfortune of embracing alternative views.

). John J. Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).

). Thomas Sappington, *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); Richard DeMaris, *Colossian Controversy: Wisdom in Dispute at Colossae* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1994); Clinton Arnold, *Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995); Troy Martin, *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit : Colossians as Response to a Cynic Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

. For a nice listing of the traditional views, see Mark Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 61–65.

2. Morna Hooker, "Were There False Teachers in Colossae?" in *Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 315–31; a more recent advocate of this view is Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte*.

3. In one of the most impressive studies of Colossians and its Sitz of recent years, Standhartinger (*Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte*) recognizes that eschatology is the key, but she goes too far and in the wrong direction, coming up with a creative and imaginative thesis that is probably too imaginative by half: the author knows, as do his readers, that Paul is no longer living (thus she appeals to 4:3, 2:1, and 2:5 and cites Lohse, *Mitarbeiter*, p. 193; Charles Nielsen, *Status of Paul;* Margaret MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 127ff., and others; p. 3, n. 6). And so for her, he is writing a "letter from heaven" (Himmelsbrief), to encourage them in the face of his own death. What matters is not the polemic but the paranesis: be strong. As she puts it (p. 195): "the cause of the letter is not a specific theological position of a real group of opponents, but pessimism and discouragement in the face of the death of Paul." In her view, then, "Col intends to comfort the community/ies that have been discouraged and dispersed by the death of Paul through a 'heavenly letter' from Paul, and to counter the process of dispersal that the author fears will take place. … The theological concept of this part of the wisdom movement attempts to encounter eschatological doubts with an 'un-eschatological' concept of the presentist ascent of the soul to God." ("nicht eine bestimmte theologische Position einer realen Gegnerinnen-und

Gegnergruppe, sondern Pessimismus und Verunsicherung angesichts des Todes des Paulus Anlaß des Briefes ist. … Die Intention des Kol ist es, der/den durch den Tod des Paulus verunsicherten und auseinanderlaufenden Gemeinde(n) durch einen 'Himmelsbrief' des Paulus Trost zuzusprechen und dem von den Verf befürchteten Zerfallsprozeß entgegenzuwirken. … Das theologische Konzept dieses Teils der Weisheitsbewegung versucht, eschatologischen Zweifeln mit einem 'uneschatologischen' Konzept des präsentischen Aufstiegs der Seele zu Gott zu begegnen.") It is an intriguing position, but not probative, in my view, for two reasons. First, there is in fact nothing in the verses in question (4:3, 2:1, 2:5) to indicate that Paul is "dead." Quite the contrary, the language of the letter strives to assert just the opposite, especially the "I, Paul" passages already noted above. Second, and of key importance, the polemical language of the letter is not actually directed toward eschatological false teachings. That is to say, the eschatology is part and parcel of the author's discourse, but not as a response to alternative views. Instead, the author's eschatology is used to deal with a different kind of problem (worship of angels and so on, not the death of Paul).

4. See note 47.

5. Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte*, pp. 15–16.

6. Erasmus, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (Basel, 1519), p. 413.

7. Much that is "dem Apostel fremd … oder seiner nicht recht würdig scheint, in Schreib-… und Denkart." As quoted in Michael Gese, *Das Vermächtnis des Apostels: Die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie im Epheserbrief*, WUNT 2, 99 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), p. 1.

8. *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951).

9. Gerhard Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

0. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians, WBC*, 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), p. xlviii.

1. Martin Hüneburg, "Paulus versus Paulus: Der Epheserbrief als Korrektur des Kolosserbriefes," in J. Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 390.

2. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, p. xlviii.

3. Ernest Best, "Who Used Whom? The Relationship of Ephesians and Colossians," *NTS* 43 (1997): 72–96. For the older studies, see Victor Paul Furnish, "Ephesians, Epistle to the," in ABD, 2. 537.

4. Leppä, *Making of Colossians*, pp. 32–45.

5. A. Q. Morton and J. McLeman, *Paul: The Man and the Myth* (New York:

Harper & Row, 1966), table 6.

6. Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, AB 34 (New York: Doubleday, 1974); vol. 1 (Eph. 1–3), p. 49.

7. Best tries to mute the force of this argument by pointing out that Paul too widely varies how he refers to Satan, referencing 2 Thess 3:3 "the evil one," and 2 Cor. 6:15 "Beliar." Does it need to be pointed out that one of these passages is forged and the other interpolated?

8. Given the occasional reserve of the author—there is still some kind of future for this world—Lindemann may press the matter too far by claiming that the author of Ephesians has sacrificed Paul's eschatology (*Die Aufhebung der Zeit: Geschichtsverständnis und Eschatologie im Epheserbrief* [Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1975], p. 352). The Pauline eschatology has not been sacrificed; it has simply been muted and altered in a thoroughly non-Pauline direction. The view of Ephesians, again, appears to be precisely the one advocated by (Pauline?) enthusiasts in Corinth, whom Paul goes to some length to argue against.

9. See especially Rom. 5:9–10 and 1 Cor. 3:15, 5:5. The one possible exception of Paul using "salvation" language in a past sense is Rom. 8:24; but even there the entire point is that Christians have been saved "in hope," that is, in expectation of an ultimate event, yet to take place. This is precisely what is lacking in the Ephesians passage.

0. Ernest Best, *Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 12–13. Among his arguments, Best claims that "had Tertullian been told that Ephesians had been written by a disciple of Paul he would have had no difficulty in accepting it, for he accepted the Gospels of Mark and Luke because they were written by the disciples, respectively, of Peter and Paul, saying that the works which disciples publish belong to their masters"; p. 13. This completely misconstrues ancient understandings of authorship, since, as pointed out earlier, Tertullian did not think that the author of Mark claimed to be Peter or the author of Luke, Paul.

1. For example, John Muddiman's recent solution to the puzzle of Ephesians (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, BNTC, London: Continuum, 2001). For Muddiman, the letter embodies an authentic letter of Paul that has been thoroughly edited and revised, so that there are indubitable Pauline passages (3:1–4, 8; 4:20–21; 6:18–22) but also significant non-Pauline material, all together. This is an interesting attempt at a solution, but it is difficult to establish exegetically. There is no stylistic evidence in support, for example; and the problem is that the letter is thoroughly imbued with non-Pauline views. It is especially difficult to explain the parallels to the non-Pauline Colossians under this view. Muddiman claims

that the differences from Colossians show that Ephesians was not modeled on it. But the question is not why they are different. They are different letters, so of course they are different. But why are they so similar? It is not convincing to argue that Ephesians cannot be a circular letter meant eventually to come back to Colossae, since then the Colossians would have been confused by the appearance of two such different letters coming from Paul. Why should we think the letter of Ephesians was meant to show up in Colossae? Or, as I have stressed, that Colossians was? But even more, the "solution" simply creates a problem of its own by pushing the problem back a stage, making the book a "redactional forgery." Whoever added the additional non-Pauline material and rephrased the Pauline material would, in this case, have published it as if it were Paul's letter itself. But it was not Paul's. It was this other person's letter, with his own ideas and thoughts (some of Paul's retained, others of his own added) published in the name of someone who in fact did not publish it.

2. "Paulus versus Paulus," pp. 387–409.

3. Pervo makes a similar argument concerning the relationship of Colossians and Ephesians, in *Making of Paul*, p. 71.

4. A defense of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians can still be found in commentaries written, especially, by authors opposed to the notion of canonical forgery on principle. A good recent example is Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), who points out that it would be hard to see how those "who knew Paul would have accepted this as Paul's work so shortly after his death." This begs the question of audience. He goes on to state that "most pseudepigraphical works are apocalyptic and not epistolary in form" (p. 43), the force of which is hard indeed to penetrate. He also stresses the problematic of Eph. 6:21–22, asking the rather remarkable questions of how the historical Tychicus could have explained that he did not carry the letter, and why a pseudonymous author would ask for prayers if he was, in fact, already dead.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Later Forgeries Dealing with Eschatology

It should come as no surprise that apostolic forgeries involving variant eschatological views continued to appear after the earliest period of the Christian pseudepigraphic tradition. Once the overly sanguine expectations of an imminent end began not just to wane in some circles, but to disappear altogether, various Christian thinkers developed a variety of eschatological views, many of which stood at odds with one another. Some maintained that even though the early time table may have been wrong—the end was not to have come immediately in Jesus' generation—the basic scenario was right: the end was still to come right away, in their own time. Others contended that the apocalyptic scenario itself was flawed at the core: the Kingdom of God was not to be a future event to transpire literally on earth, but either a postmortem experience of the individual or a present reality in the resurrected existence enjoyed in the present, by both the individual and the collective body of the church. These alternative views found expression in the proclamation of various Christian leaders at the end of the first century and beginning of the second, and occasionally a writer would assume the guise of a prominent spokesperson, an apostle of Jesus, in order to authorize his position, as well as to polemicize against those advancing contrary positions.

One such forgery is the letter of 2 Timothy, written in part, allegedly, to oppose two teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who insisted that "the resurrection is already past" (2:17–18). The authorship of 2 Timothy has become a matter of renewed interest over the past two decades, as some have argued that it, unlike its two Pastoral counterparts, should be credited as orthonymous;[1] others, including one major commentator, have mounted a spirited defense for the authenticity of all three of the Pastoral epistles.[2] In view of these ongoing discussions, it is important for the purposes of this study to explore at some length the question of authorship of the Pastoral corpus, before turning to the question of the eschatological polemic of 2 Timothy in particular. Later in the study we will return to the views of 1 Timothy and Titus, whose polemical concerns lie in a different direction.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

The question of the Pastoral epistles, as a group, is important historically, as these were the first writings of the New Testament whose authorship was seriously questioned in modern times. It is commonly stated that doubts were first expressed in 1807 by Friedrich Schleiermacher, in a public letter to J. C. Gass, *Über den sogenannten Ersten Brief des Paulus an den Timotheus: Ein Kritisches Sendschreiben.*[3] Jens Herzer has pointed out, however, that the authorship of 1 Timothy was questioned three years earlier by Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt, in his *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament.*[4] The first to assert that all three Pastorals were to be considered as a group, to stand or fall together, was J. G. Eichhorn, in his own celebrated *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*. Eichhorn claimed that he had been questioning the authenticity of the books before Schleiermacher's letter appeared; his case against all three was based on historical, rather than stylistic questions.[5] These were largely the bases applied by F. C. Baur as well, who maintained that the opponents attacked in the letters were second-century Gnostics and so, obviously, not contemporary with Paul. The letters were therefore pseudepigraphic.[6] Baur's view moved toward a critical consensus with the 1880 commentary of Heinrich Holtzmann, *Die Pastoralbriefe, kritisch und exegetisch behandelt.*[7] Despite the outspoken minority of naysayers, the consensus by and large holds today, with the overwhelming preponderance of critical scholars maintaining that all three letters are clearly post-Pauline.

It should not be thought, however, that the question about the authenticity of the letters is simply a modern one. Hints and clear indications of doubt can be found among our earliest evidence. Our oldest extensive manuscript of the Pauline epistles, P^{46}, suffers a large lacuna in its missing final pages, but despite the intriguing claims of J. Duff, these have been shown by E. Epp not to have been sufficient to have contained all three of the letters.[8] Whatever else they may have contained is anyone's guess. Marcion too did not have (or know about?) the three letters, as Tertullian stresses (*Adv. Marc*. 5.21). The same may have been true of Tatian (according to Jerome; *PL* 26.556). But that is not all: around 200 CE Clement of Alexandria reports that "some heretics" rejected 1 and 2 Timothy because of their contents (*Strom*. 2.52.6) and Origen notes that some orthodox Christians reject 2 Timothy because of its approbation of the magicians Jannes and Jambres in 3:8 (*Comm. on Matthew* ser. 117).

Supporters of the authenticity of the letters occasionally point to their use in other writers of the early church, most especially Polycarp. The matter of early usage is of historical interest, but it scarcely can be counted as evidence for Pauline authorship. Someone writing, say, twenty years after the books were

placed in circulation may well have assumed that they were Paul's. After all, they claim to be Paul's. And certainly the fact that the authorship was more or less secure for centuries, down to the 1800s, is of no relevance at all.[9] The unconsidered opinion of thirteenth-century monks has no evidentiary value.

The Standard View of the Pastorals and Its Detractors

As already noted, the view adopted by Eichhorn in 1812, that the Pastorals are to be differentiated from the other Pauline letters, yet seen as a "zusammengehörende Gruppe," is still prevalent today, two centuries later. Norbert Brox states the case in these terms:

> Their unity and status as a closed group is documented further in the details, including their close relationship in terms of language (style, vocabulary), content, and presupposed church-historical situation. They speak the same high Greek, live in the same theological context, combat the same heresies, know on the whole the same organization and conception of the individual churches….[10]

Aspects of this view are open to dispute, as we will see. In particular, there is no reason to think that the false teachings attacked by 1 Timothy and Titus are the same as those taken on by 2 Timothy, and the church structure and organization of the two letters is not evidenced in the third. But most scholars continue to see them as a group of three letters rather than individual, isolated productions. In its most extreme form this view is taken to mean that the three letters were produced—and are to be read—as a corpus, as stated by P. Trummer: "The pastoral epistles are not created merely as pseudepigraphal Pauline *epistles* per se, but are conceptualized also as a pseudepigraphal *pastoral corpus*."[11] And, more recently, G. Häfner.[12]

The consensus view of the letters was represented earlier by Brox: the three letters as a group differ in significant ways from the seven undisputed Paulines, or even from all ten other letters of the Pauline corpus. As pointed out, however, there have been lively objections raised from various quarters over the past two decades, in particular over the question of whether the three letters cohere sufficiently to be thought of as a corpus to be read as a unit rather than as individual productions. Among the detractors are, notably, Michael Prior, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Luke Timothy Johnson, William A. Richards, Rüdiger

Fuchs, James Aageson, and Jens Herzer[13]—all of whom argue, on one set of grounds or another, that the letters differ sufficiently from one another as to warrant the view (at least in theory) that they may have been written by different authors. The most extreme position is taken by W. A. Richards, who claims that the Pastoral epistles represent the work of three authors, all writing for their own purposes, in different places, and in different times, possibly as much as sixty years apart.

I plan to map out a different view in the pages that follow, a modification of the broader consensus. In my judgment all three books were in fact written by the same author. But that does not mean they are to be read as an undifferentiated corpus. Each letter has its own concerns—those of 2 Timothy not necessarily coinciding, for example, with those of 1 Timothy—any more than the concerns of the orthonymous Galatians need be those of 1 Corinthians. In particular, the polemical purposes of the letters may differ. That does not mean, however, that they were written by different authors.

Those who want to stress that the three letters do not form a corpus make a methodological error when they stress, as they invariably do, that the three letters have so many differences among themselves. On one hand, many of those typically cited are simply differences of no moment: 1 Timothy deals with widows and deacons, but Titus does not; 1 Timothy deals with wealth as a problem, but Titus does not; Timothy is called an evangelist, but Titus is not; and so on. But why should two letters deal with all of the same topics and say exactly the same things?

When trying to establish common authorship, it is not the differences of two (or three) writings that matter, but the similarities. One should think of the analogous, though not identical, situation of the Synoptic Gospels. One could easily point to difference after difference between Luke and Matthew and conclude, then, that they derive from different sources. But it is the similarities they share—verbatim agreements in telling the same stories in the same sequence—that show their literary connections. So too, by analogy, with the authorship of the Pastorals. It is all too simple to point out difference after difference among them, but so what? One could just as easily point out the differences between 1 Thessalonians and Galatians, or between Ignatius's letters to the Smyrneans and the Romans. The question of relationship hinges on the similarities, which have to be explained, however one accounts for the differences.

It is true that taken in isolation, 2 Timothy does indeed look more like Paul than the other two letters, as I will be stressing momentarily. And for a time, I

too was nearly persuaded that it might be orthonymous. But at the end of the day, the evidence is simply too overwhelming that the author of 2 Timothy must have been the author of the other two. This does not mean that we can amalgamate the three and pile up statistics based on the corpus to show how different they are, as a collection, from Paul. Each individual work has to be considered not just in relation to the other two, but also in relation to Paul. Nowhere is that more important than in considering the polemical thrusts of the letters. 1 Timothy and Titus appear to take on one set of opponents, and 2 Timothy another.

The One Author of the Pastorals

As a first step in laying out the modified consensus view it is especially important—in light of the demurrals of recent years—to establish the grounds for thinking that all three of the Pastoral epistles go back to the same author. The reason this matters for our discussions here should be patent: if 2 Timothy was written by the author of 1 Timothy, and 1 Timothy is forged, then 2 Timothy is necessarily forged. Not every egg should be set in this basket; as I will argue below, there are compelling reasons for thinking that each of the Pastorals individually, 2 Timothy included, does not go back to Paul. But the individual arguments are only strengthened by the circumstance that the same forger probably produced all three books.

1 Timothy and Titus

There has been far less disagreement over the joint authorship of 1 Timothy and Titus than over 2 Timothy in relationship to the other two.[14] There are in fact clear and compelling reasons for seeing 1 Timothy and Titus as products of the same pen, many of them being reasons for seeing all three as jointly authored (these latter reasons will be dealt with later). One of them reads very much like a kind of abridgment of the other; or the other reads like an expansion of the first. There are obvious parallels between them, for example in the instructions for the qualifications of leaders, the guidance given to “older men,” to “younger men” and so on. In particular, there are numerous clear and specific parallels and overlaps that are virtually inexplicable apart from a literary relationship of some kind, either an abject borrowing of one author by another or, far more likely in this case, joint authorship. I mean the following data to be illustrative, not comprehensive; but they are more than enough to show some of the ties between the two books.

The connections start at the outset, where the phrase κατʼ ἐπιταγὴν θεοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν of 1 Tim. 1:1 is matched by the κατʼ ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ of Tit. 1:3. It is virtually the same phrase, found in only these two places in the New Testament. The phrase τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ is itself found three times in each of these two letters, and nowhere else in the entire Pauline Corpus.

Moreover, the greeting to the addressee is far too close to be accidental, as nothing like it is found anywhere else in the New Testament, apart from 2 Timothy:

> Τιμοθέῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (1 Tim. 1:2)
>
> Τίτῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ κατὰ κοινὴν πίστιν, χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν. (Tit. 1:4)

This is the same writer, as shown by numerous words, phrases, and ideas, found in these two books but nowhere else in the Pauline corpus. Καιροῖς ἰδίοις is found in 1 Tim. 2:6 and Tit. 1:3, but never in Paul. Christ as an ἀντίλυτρον (1 Tim. 2:6) is matched by the verbal form λυτρώσηται in Tit. 2:14; the root never occurs in Paul. The phrase ἰδίους δεσπότας of 1 Tim. 6:1 is paralleled in Titus 2:9, but never in Paul. It should not be objected that this is because Paul does not have a Haustafel, since that is precisely the problem: Haustafeln are notably absent from the Pauline letters. In the same context, the warrant ἵνα μὴ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ … βλασφημῆται of 1 Tim. 6:1 is found as ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημῆται in Titus 2:5. Elsewhere the instruction concerning the bishop, δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημπτον εἶναι 1 Tim. 3:2 is closely paralleled by the δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπονἀνέκλητον εἶναι (Tit. 1:7), particularly striking in view of the fact that the term ἐπίσκοπος itself is so rare in the New Testament (only Phil. 1:1 in Paul).

The opponents of the author in both letters are teachers of the Law (1 Tim. 1:7; Tit. 1:10, 14; 3:9) who are interested in “genealogies” (1 Tim. 1:4; Tit. 3:9—the only two occurrences of the word in the New Testament), that involve ἔρις (1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:9) and ζητήσεις (1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:9; apart from 2 Tim. 2:23 the latter word never occurs in Paul).

The contents, polemics, instructions, and exhortations of the letters are simply too similar to think they come from a different pen, unless one author is copying another for purposes of his own. Even if that were the case, it should be noted that the copier (which would it be?) would necessarily be a forger, claiming to be

Paul. But there are grounds for thinking that in fact neither book was written by Paul, as we will see.

1 Timothy and 2 Timothy

The question of the relationship of 1 and 2 Timothy is somewhat more pressing, given the forceful case made by critics such as M. Prior and J. Murphy-O’Connor that 2 Timothy is unlike the other two pastoral epistles and so, possibly, orthonymous. The arguments used to establish the point, however, are wanting, for the reason mentioned above. It is quite simple to point out the many ways that 2 Timothy differs from the other two Pastoral letters; but if one wants to establish joint authorship, it is to be done not on the basis of differences but similarities. The verbatim parallels have to be explained, and these cannot be tossed off as either accidental or, probably as we will see, the result of one author borrowing from the work of another. Here again I do not plan a comprehensive survey, but will simply restrict myself to some of the outstanding examples drawn from the first two chapters of 2 Timothy.

The greetings to the addressees in 1 and 2 Timothy are virtually identical and are unlike anything in Paul, except the address to Titus. Someone is either borrowing or the same author produced both:

> Τιμοθέῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (1 Tim. 1:2)
>
> Τιμοθέῳ ἀγαπητῷ τέκνῳ, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (2 Tim. 1:2)

These two chapters share an abundance of unusual words and phrases. ἐπαγγελίαν ζωῆς occurs in 2 Tim. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 4:8; but never in Paul; χάριν ἔχω with the dative is found in 2 Tim. 1:3 and 1 Tim. 1:12 and nowhere else in the New Testament. The notion of laying on hands—ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν—is found in the rest of the New Testament only in Acts 8:18 and Heb. 6:2, otherwise only in reference to Timothy in 1 Tim. 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6; in both of these latter instances it refers to the χάρισμα . . . ἐν σοί.

The non-Pauline phrase διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ of 2 Tim. 1:10 is matched by the μέχρι τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ of 1 Tim. 6:14. It should be noted that the term ἐπιφάνεια occurs only five times in the New Testament, once in 2 Thessalonians and all four other times in the Pastorals.[15] The striking self-description of Paul in 2 Tim. 1:11, εἰς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κῆρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος καὶ διδάσκαλος is paralleled in

εἰς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κῆρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος, ἀλήθειαν λέγω οὐ ψεύδομαι, διδάσκαλος ἐθνῶν in 1 Tim. 2:7 with the odd exception of the oath that "Paul" for some reason would feel impelled to swear to his close companion. The term κῆρυξ occurs in the NT otherwise just in 2 Pet. 2:5.

The injunction τὴν παραθήκην μου φυλάξαι of 2 Tim. 1:12 has its counterpart in 1 Tim. 6:20 τὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον; the term παραθήκη occurs just one other time in the New Testament, also in 2 Tim: τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον (1:14). ὑποτύπωσις occurs only two times in the New Testament, 2 Tim. 1:13 and 1 Tim. 1:16. Somewhat more striking is ὑγιαίνω, which occurs three times in Luke, once in 3 John, and twice each in 1 and 2 Timothy (1 Tim. 1:10, 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13, 4:3; along with four additional times in Titus). Particularly striking are the parallels between 2 Tim. 1:13 ὑγιαινόντων λόγων and 1 Tim. 6:3 ὑγιαίνουσιν λόγοις and 2 Tim. 4:3 ὑγιαινούσης διδασκαλίας and 2 Tim. 1:10 ὑγιαινούσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ. The latter phrase can also be found in Titus 1:9 and 2:1.

Δίωκε δὲ δικαιοσύνη is found identically in 2 Tim. 2:22 and 1 Tim. 6:11, and never in Paul–for obvious reasons, given Paul's teaching on justification (which is not "pursued" by believers!); so too ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας in 2 Tim. 2:22 and 1 Tim. 1:5 is found nowhere else in Paul and only one other time in the New Testament (depending on the textual variant in 1 Pet. 1:22).

The term ζητήσεις occurs once in John and three times in Acts, but otherwise just in 2 Tim. 2:23 and 1 Tim. 6:4 (along with Titus 3:9; 1 Timothy also has a cognate hapax legomenon, ἐκζήτησις in 1:4). So too the phrase τὰς βεβήλους is found only in 2 Tim. 2:16 and 1 Tim. 6:20. Moreover, the otherwise unattested κενοφωνίας in 2 Tim. 2:26 is found as τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου παγίδος in 1 Tim. 3:7.

Many, many more verbatim agreements could easily be noted between the two letters, especially if we move beyond the first two chapters. But this is enough to make the point. Not only are there numerous words and phrases shared between the two books. That would be remarkable enough. But what makes the parallels particularly striking is that they are not Pauline words, found in other Pauline writings, orthonymous or forged; in fact, most of them are not words found (either at all or extensively) within the entire New Testament. There is clearly a literary relationship between these two books. And there is a good reason for thinking that it is not simply a relationship of one author borrowing the phrases of another—precisely *because* the words are distinctive to these two books (sometimes along with Titus). If one of the books served as the model for the other, the author of the second happened to pick out as the words to be replicated an inordinate number that are not found commonly elsewhere in the New Testament or Paul.[16]

And so, the different concerns expressed in 1 and 2 Timothy, problems they address, and responses they give to the problems do not require, or even suggest, that they were written by different authors, as is sometimes asserted. The linguistic parallels indicate they were written by the same author. He simply wrote the letters for different reasons.

2 Timothy and Titus

That all three letters were written by the same author should be clear from the foregoing: Titus and 1 Timothy are jointly authored, and so are 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. This is a situation somewhat analogous to the Johannine epistles. There may be scant reason, in isolation, to think of 1 John as related to 3 John; but the reality is that whoever wrote 1 John also wrote 2 John; and the author of 2 John wrote 3 John; necessarily, then, 1 John and 3 John are jointly authored. The case of the Pastorals is even more certain because here there are so many striking similarities as well among the three, as we will see in a moment, and even between 2 Timothy and Titus, looked at by themselves.

And so, for example, 2 Tim. 3:17, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος is closely tied to πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἑτοίμους εἶναι of Titus 3:1; so too the virtual repetition of διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ in 2 Tim. 1:10 as ἐπιφάνειαν . . . σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Tit. 2:13. The concluding phrase "our Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 1:4; 2:13) occurs nowhere else in the Pauline corpus (though cf. Phil. 3:20). The same can be said of the phrase εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν (Tit. 2:12) found in 2 Tim. as εὐσεβῶς ζῆν (3:12). The phrase μωράς . . . ζητήσεις in 2 Tim. 2:23 reappears precisely in Tit. 3:9, and nowhere else in the New Testament. Finally, the verb ἀποστρέφω is used only one time by Paul, in a quotation of Isa 59:20 in Rom. 11:26; but is used only twice in the New Testament with ἀλήθεια, 2 Tim. 4:4 and Tit. 1:14.

The Three Letters Together

The final coup de grace comes with the unmistakable and, otherwise inexplicable, verbal parallels of all three letters vis-à-vis Paul. Here the evidence cited individually above for the greetings of all three letters can be placed together. There is nothing like this in Paul, and it is impossible to imagine that the three could exist without a literary relationship:

> Τιμοθέῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (1 Tim. 1:2)
>
> Τιμοθέῳ ἀγαπητῷ τέκνῳ, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. (2 Tim. 1:2)
>
> Τίτῳ γνησίῳ τέκνῳ κατὰ κοινὴν πίστιν, χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν. (Tit. 1:4)

So too numerous other words and phrases. The phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος is never found in Paul, but is scattered throughout the three letters (1 Tim. 1:15, 3:1, 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8). So too ἐπίγνωσις τῆς ἀληθείας; it never is found in Paul but is in all three Pastorals (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25, 3:7; Tit. 1:1). The important term εὐσέβεια occurs never in Paul, but frequently in the pastorals (1 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:5; Tit. 1:1). The term μῦθος occurs never in Paul but does appear four times in the Pastorals (1 Tim. 1:4, 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14; one other time in the New Testament: 2 Pet. 1:16). As we have seen ζήτησις also never occurs in Paul but in all three Pastorals ([1 Tim. 1:4,] 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Tit. 3:9); the same is true of the phrase ὑγιαινούῃ διδασκαλίᾳ (1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1). The term ὠφέλιμος never occurs elsewhere in the New Testament, but four times in these books (1 Tim. 4:8 [bis], 2 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 3:8). The verb παραιτέομαι never occurs in Paul, and never as an imperative in the New Testament, except in all three of the pastorals (1 Tim. 4:7, 5:11; 2 Tim. 2:23; Tit. 3:10).

There is more to be said, but this is enough for our purposes. There is almost nothing in these particular words and phrases—except possibly the term “myths”—that makes them unsuitable for many of the other books elsewhere in the New Testament, or just for Paul. It is not that they are objectionable or puzzlingly unusual constructions. They are simply an author’s preferred vocabulary. It is possible, of course, that one author wrote one of the books, and another author decided to copy many of its distinctive words and phrases to produce a book of his own. But given the facts that all three books have numerous similarities together while each of them has similarities with each of the others not shared by the third, the simplest solution is that one author produced all three books.[17] This is especially the case given the evidence, yet to be adduced, that each of the letters as well as the corpus as a whole was probably not written by Paul.

It seems odd to find—as one sometimes does—scholars who claim that each of the Pastorals was produced by a different author without even considering, for a moment, the linguistic arguments that show otherwise.[18] Those who do

advance this view sometimes resort to linguistic arguments that appear to strain at gnats to swallow camels, as in an interesting and learned article of J. Herzer, which nonetheless maintains that the ecclesiologies of the 1 and 2 Timothy are at odds, in no small measure because the phrase οἶκος θεοῦ of 1 Tim. 3:15 is inconsistent with the οἰκία of 2 Tim. 2:20.[19] What of the dozens of distinctive and virtually impossible to explain verbal overlaps? It is even odder to find, on the far other side, a commentator like L. T. Johnson arguing against treating the three letters as a group produced by a single author, in the introduction to a commentary that treats 1 and 2 Timothy as two books by a single author (in his case, Paul, also, for him, author of Titus).[20]

Sometimes scholars, such as Gordon Fee, ask the rhetorical question of why a pseudepigrapher would have produced three such books instead of just one—overlooking the fact that Fee himself thinks that this is precisely what Paul did.[21] Apart from that, the rhetoric has no force. Why do we have fourteen letters between Paul and Seneca? Surely two or three would do. Why are their six pseudo-Ignatian letters instead of one? Why does any forger forge more than one work, even if he has similar things to say? With the Pastoral epistles one could imagine all sorts of reasons for an author wanting to write three letters. 2 Timothy, as I have been emphasizing, differs more from the other two than they do from each other, and so was obviously written for different reasons. As to the other two—just staying in the realm of pure speculation—one of them could have been a draft for the second; the second could have been an expansion of the first; they could have been written to different places, audiences, or times. They could have been merely two letters out of twenty that the person wrote. Maybe five or six others were reasonably similar; who knows? The answer, of course, is that no one knows. But one cannot object that a forger would not write three letters. Why would he not write three letters? Or thirty-nine? Even if the author wrote three and only three letters, one can imagine good reasons even for that; as Richard Pervo has recently pointed out, “Three is … a satisfactory and symbolic number, implying a true collection.”[22]

In short, it appears that the same author produced the three Pastoral letters. Moreover, there are very good reasons for thinking this author was not Paul. Many of the strongest reasons have to do with the contents of the letters individually: what they actually say that stands at odds with views otherwise well documented for Paul himself. But the force of the argument for taking them as a collective should not be pushed aside. If one of these letters is forged, they are all forged, because they were all likely written by the same hand. In evaluating the question of authorship, Johnson is far less than generous, or at

least being excessively rhetorical, when he claims that “the main argument against authenticity today is the sheer weight of scholarly consensus.”[23] The reality is that the vast majority of the New Testament scholars who discuss the issue have read and mastered the scholarship and found that it is convincing, and have seen little reason then to reinvent the wheel.

Arguments from the Three Letters Together

It is true that bad arguments are often made to attack the Pauline authorship of the letters. It is commonly and roundly asserted that it is hard to locate the letters in Paul’s ministry as laid out either in his own letters or Acts. But as Johnson points out, our hard information on Paul’s ministry is extremely sparse: eight of the twelve years spanning 50 and 62 CE are summed up in the book of Acts in four lines.[24] But the arguments for considering the group as a whole pseudonymous are powerful, and we have already seen the opening gambit. Not only is a good deal of the vocabulary—terms, phrases, sentences—shared among the three letters, this shared vocabulary in particular is not Pauline.

Issues concerning the vocabulary and style of the Pastorals have been batted around for a very long time. The seemingly convincing case that P. N. Harrison made in 1921,[25] with its well-known lists and numbers of hapax legomena, was early on shown to be less than definitive by shorter studies, such as the pointed response by W. Michaelis.[26] But study after study continues to demonstrate the enormous linguistic problems.[27] The reality is that these letters are far less like Paul than anything in Paul.

This is recognized even by those who want to challenge the consensus opinion. The most recent attempt has been made by Armin Baum, who tries to explain one of the distinctive features of the letters: they violate the otherwise solid rule that shorter letters of Paul tend to use relatively fewer distinctive than common words. The pastorals have a vocabulary that is, by comparison with the other letters in the corpus, exceedingly rich; here there are approximately 20 percent more distinctive than common words.[28] This is a statistic that is obviously hard to explain on the assumption of Pauline authorship, especially when one looks at the hard data. As Baum shows, for example, 2 Timothy uses 451 different words, 161 (22 percent) of which are found only in 2 Timothy in the New Testament. In an average Pauline letter of this length we would expect only 42 distinctive words (12 percent). So how does one answer this incommensurability in favor of Pauline authorship? Baum does so with a theory: since it has been argued that written compositions tend to evidence richer word

choice than oral communications, the Pastoral epistles may have been planned as written works rather than dictated off the top of Paul's head.

It is hard to know where to begin with any such claim, but possibly it should be with the question of proof. One is hard pressed to know what evidence Baum might find persuasive for his view, since he presents it as a suggestion and so martials no argument. But what are we to think—that Paul's letter to the Romans, for example, was dashed off in a hasty mode of dictation, but 2 Timothy was carefully plotted and outlined as a literary text? Given the nature of the two letters, this seems, on the generous side, a shade unlikely. And the comparatively richer vocabulary itself cannot serve as the evidence that it happened this way, since that is the datum the theory is trying to explain.

Baum not only presents no evidence, he considers no obvious counterevidence, such as the observation of Quinn that the syntax of these letters sometimes breaks down, with "inordinately rough abrupt transitions (thus Titus 2:6–8; 1 Tim. 3:1a–b), inexplicable shifts in the inflection of verbs (1 Tim. 2:15), … sentence fragments that are without a verb or object to weld their endless phrases together (thus Titus 1:1–4; 1 Tim. 1:3–7)."[29] These do not give the appearance, at least, of being carefully plotted literary compositions.

There is more to the argument from vocabulary than a mere listing of unusual terms, even with an inordinately high level of frequency. More probative is the fact stressed so frequently, and for good reason, that some of the key terms actually shared with Paul take on other meanings—and this with words that matter a good deal to both Paul and the author of the Pastorals. And so, as commonly and rightly pointed out, δικαιοσύνη has lost its Pauline character involving justification by an act of God, and has become a virtue for the believer to pursue (thus 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22). So too "faith" is no longer a relational term, referring to a trusting relationship with God through Christ, or trust "in" the death of Christ for salvation. It is now the content of the religion (thus 1 Tim. 4:6; 5:8). In this linguistic world, the recurring phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος no longer sounds even vaguely odd.

As Harrison noted already in 1921, the vocabulary preferred by the author resonates more closely with the Christian language of the second century than with Paul. Yet more important, the historical situation of the church itself, embodied in the descriptions afforded by this vocabulary, appears to have moved far along from the days of Paul's charismatic communities. This is a factor that is completely underplayed and slighted by Johnson, who wants to see a solid continuity between the church of the Pastorals and the church of Paul.[30] What is far more salient to most readers is the radical discontinuity. We can get a good

sense of “Pauline” churches from two corpora of letters, the Corinthian correspondence and the Pastorals. It is hard to see how these derive from contexts that are at all equivalent either temporally or ideologically. When Paul is dealing with the manifest problems in the church of Corinth—disunity, immorality, disorganization, false teachings, and so on—why does he not write to the leader or leaders he has appointed in order to convince them to bring their people into line? Surely it is because there were no leaders, in that sense, who could do so. And the correspondence is completely unambiguous as to why. There were no “offices” in the Corinthian church that were conveyed by the laying on of hands (or by selection) to those who had set qualifications and the ability to lead. Each member of the community had a spiritual gift that was to be used for the upbuilding of the community; each person needed to use these gifts with ἀγάπη for the entire community, being concerned not for self-aggrandizement but for the good of the whole. If they followed the direction of the Spirit there would be harmony in the body of Christ as every part worked together for the greater good.

And what does the author of the Pastorals have to say about the spiritual gifts bestowed upon each member of the community given to benefit the body of Christ through their loving application? Nothing. His concerns are the leaders of the churches, “Paul’s” personal representatives left behind to organize, structure, and direct the community, and the overseers and deacons who have responsibilities to fulfill. This is a different kind of community, and it does not take a degree in Weberian sociology to recognize what has happened in the historical movement from the chaos of Corinth to the structure of the Pastorals. The expectation of an imminent end of the age had waned (there would still be a future, to be sure), the sense of living in a short interim period had passed, and disorganization and local problems had led to sensible and logical solutions; there needed to be leaders in the church, these persons needed to be qualified, they needed to take charge and make decisions, and in particular they—not the Spirit through ecstatic utterance or the apostle (no longer living) through written communication—needed to pull in the reins on those proffering false and harmful teaching. The women who once exercised authority in the church through their teaching and prophesying needed to be brought to bay now that the church needed to be seen as a respectable institution. The leaders needed to be upright *men* admired even by those on the outside. Widows now had a special function in the life of the church (where does one find anything like *that* in the Pauline letters, Corinthians or otherwise?). Social relations needed to be normalized in the church and the serious asceticism that preferred the life of celibacy in light of the “impending disaster” had thus given way to a traditional

set of social values that treasured marriage and family as solid Christian values.

It is true, as Johnson himself stresses, that the Pastoral epistles are not concerned to set up a church organization, as they are sometimes wrongly read. They are concerned with the qualifications of the leaders who man (literally) this organization—not with the duties that they are to perform. But this speaks even more for the pseudepigraphic character of 1 Timothy and Titus—the two letters I have been referring to—because these letters do not assume that a church hierarchy is starting to be established to replace the charismatic ordering of the churches of Paul’s own day. They instead presuppose that a church hierarchy already is in place, to the extent that there are bishops, deacons, and widows who are to be enrolled. The author does not need to describe what each of these persons or groups does because this is already assumed. That is, it is common knowledge. These books were written well after the transition from a charismatic organization in which persons were authorized by the Spirit given at baptism. Now there are leaders with recognized skills and qualifications, who are ordained by the laying on of hands or selected from a pool of candidates.

It should not be objected that Philippians 1:1 presents us with the same situation already in Paul’s lifetime. Overseers and deacons are mentioned there, but there is nothing either in that verse or the entire letter (or set of letters) of Philippians as a whole to indicate that these are persons selected for an office out of a pool of candidates, or that they were ordained by the laying on of hands. In fact, nothing is said about them at all, giving us no way of knowing whether they are comparable to the figures addressed in the Pastorals or not. If we assume they are it is not because of any evidence, since, in fact, there is no hint of evidence; it is simply a hopeful assumption. The fact that these Philippian overseers and deacons are never addressed in the letter(s) is itself far more telling: Paul does not tell them to correct the false teaching in the congregation, or to make sure Euodia and Syntyche fall in line, or to deal with any of the problems of the church. The differences from the Pastorals are apt.

The authorities for these Pastoral communities are not only the apostolic voice, delivered in writing; they also include written texts that have been elevated to a level of sacrality. This was true for Paul as well, who used the Jewish Scriptures to that end extensively (in at least some of his correspondence), and who could, as well, cite the oral traditions of the words of Jesus. The key difference with the Pastorals is found most clearly in 1 Tim. 5:18, where not just Jesus’ teachings per se but a written text containing those teachings is deemed authoritative; in fact is labeled “Scripture.” Whether the quotation comes from the (now-known) Gospel of Luke (10:7) or from some

other written source, the dominical teachings are now known to be written and are on a par with the Scriptures cited so extensively by Paul. Here too we are in a period beyond Paul's time, at the end of the first century at the very earliest, when Gospel texts were assuming a position of authority in the local communities associated with Paul and others of the apostles.

It is important to stress that all of these various arguments are cumulative and all point in the same direction. The accumulation is not merely as strong as its weakest link. One argument after the other simply reinforces the one that precedes: the distinctive vocabulary, its non-Pauline character and force, the post-Pauline historical situation, the role of authorities in the church including written Gospel texts. At the same time, it cannot be stressed enough that specific comments of each of the individual books as well point in precisely the same direction, reinforcing the sense that if one of these books is forged, they all are forged.

Arguments from Each of the Books

The following passages represent statements that seem to stand at odds with the views of the historical Paul, as known from the undisputed letters. In no case can one say that Paul definitely would never have made any such statement. Large allowance must always be made for the flexibility of his thought, his ability to say seemingly contrary things, the possibility that his views developed over time, and the reality that he occasionally changed his mind, even about important matters. But it cannot help but strike the careful reader that so many of the comments in the Pastorals appear to run counter to Paul's views attested elsewhere. We are not dealing with one or two isolated statements. And so, these comments should not be treated in isolation from one another, but as a Gestalt that confirms the findings already set forth, that whoever wrote these letters, it appears not to have been Paul. Here again, my comments are meant not to be exhaustive but illustrative.

1 Timothy

As with the other two Pastorals, there is no point contending that 1 Timothy sounds completely unlike Paul. In many ways, or at least many places, it does sound like Paul, as one would expect from a letter forged by one of his later followers in his name. And there are numerous instances of verisimilitude—not nearly as many as in Titus or 2 Timothy, but numerous enough, as in the author's recollection of his former interaction with Timothy when he put him in charge of

the congregation in Ephesus (1:3), his reflection on his past life as a blasphemer and persecutor of the church, acting out of unbelief (1:12–16), his indication that he is coming to pay a visit soon (3:14, 4:13); his personal attention to Timothy, urging him to take some wine for his stomach ailment (5:23); and so on.

At the same time, there are, scattered throughout the letter, comments that if nothing else create a real puzzle for those who think the apostle himself produced them. Right off the bat one must wonder about the author's view of the Jewish Law, which he declares is good "if someone uses it lawfully" (1:8). For Paul, is God's law good conditional on human obedience? On the contrary, in Romans at least, the Law is good unconditionally, regardless of how a person uses it, since it was given by God. The problem with the Law for Paul—a notoriously vexed issue in itself, of course—was intimately connected with the problem of sin, the cosmic power that compelled people to violate the dictates of God's (good) Law. There is nothing about the power of sin here in 1 Timothy. The author instead assumes that humans are able to keep the Law and thereby affirm its goodness. And would Paul say that "the Law is not set down for the one who is just/righteous" (1:9)? Quite the contrary, that in no small measure is whom the Law is for, those who have been given the Spirit of God so that they (and they alone) can do what the Law commands, for example by loving their neighbors as themselves, which is to be done precisely because the Law, which itself is good, demands that it be done (Gal. 5:13–14).

A related matter is Paul's relation to those who promote themselves as teachers of the Law (1:7). Paul himself was always intent on showing opponents who stressed their superior relation to the Law that he himself understood it better than they, through careful and often ingenious exposition of its teachings. Here, rather than fighting his opponents on their own ground—Paul's approach—this author simply ignores the Law and refuses to engage his opponents in their views. This "Paul" does not cite the Law, deal with the "false" interpretation of the Law, or explicate the status of the Law for those in Christ.

Just as the reference to the Law has the superficial sound of a Pauline teaching, so too does the problem of false teaching dealt with at the end of chapter 1: two false teachers are said to have been "handed over to Satan" in exchange for their misdeeds, an apparent reminiscence of the incident recounted in 1 Corinthians 5. But the differences are more striking than the similarities. Here—this never happens in Paul—the opponents are called by name. Moreover, the "handing over to Satan" is not a community affair; it is something the apostle himself has done. And the purpose of the act appears otherwise indeed; in Corinth it was for the "destruction of the flesh," which may well be taken as a

death curse. In this instance it is for repentance: “that they may be trained not to blaspheme.” The clear implication is that the miscreants will be welcomed back with open arms once they have learned their lesson.

The oath that the author swears in 2:7 has a Pauline feel to it, but it is delivered in a completely un-Pauline way. When Paul utters his oath in Gal. 1:20 (“the things I am writing you—see, before God, I am not lying!”) it is to convince readers who may well have reasons of their own for not believing what he has to say; the oath, reasonably enough, is designed to convince them that he really is speaking the truth. So too the virtual oath of Rom. 9:1 “I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying.” For readers who might well suspect that Paul harbors an animosity toward the Jewish people, given everything he has said in the letter up to this point, Paul avers that nothing is farther from the truth; he insists that he is not lying about it. The author of 1 Tim. 2:7 also utters an oath: “I am telling the truth, I am not lying.” This may sound like the other two instances, but it is strikingly different. Here “Paul” is writing to his close companion and erstwhile fellow-missionary Timothy, insisting that he really is a “herald, and apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” Why would the historical Paul have to swear to this? Why would Timothy suspect anything different? They were companions on the mission field together for years.

Not much need be said about the instructions to women in 2:11–15 to be silent and submissive and to exercise no authority over men. The women in Paul’s churches were apostles and deacons; they were not silent in church or urged to be silent, but were told to speak their prayers and prophecies—congregational activities performed in the presence of men—with covered heads. The act of prophecy necessarily involves a woman in an authoritative position, as, of course, does serving as a deacon and, especially, an apostle. And to say that women’s salvation is contingent on bearing children is completely removed from anything known from the apostle Paul. Among other things, it makes being “saved” a matter of life in this world rather than at the appearance of Christ at the end. And the idea that bearing children will somehow earn the right to be saved is not even in the right ballpark of a Pauline soteriology.

The views of marriage seem to stand at odds with Paul. It is true that he never did, in the surviving letters, actually “forbid marriage” (4:3); but he certainly discouraged it, in no uncertain terms, in view of the “impending disaster” (1 Cor. 7:27–27). Not this author. Bishops are actually required to be married men with households that they rule over (3:2, 4). So too the deacons (3:12). Young women, too, are to be married and have children (5:14). How does this coincide with Paul’s wish that others—presumably leaders above all—be like him,

celibate and single (1 Cor. 7:6–7)? How could he urge celibacy in one place and forbid it in another? Where, in fact, is the "impending disaster" that marks the urgency of Paul's mission and that drives his social ethics?

Is this author even Jewish? The idea that anyone would urge people "to abstain from foods" seems completely foreign to him (4:3), a sign of living in the latter days. For this author all foods are created by God and are good, and no food is to be rejected if received thankfully (4:4). Certainly Paul himself may have come to view laws governing kashrut as adiaphora, now that Christ has fulfilled the Law. But would it have seemed strange to him, and a sign of the end of time, that there were people out there actually forbidding the consumption of certain foods? Isn't that the religion he grew up in and espoused for most of his early life? Can he conceive of the kosher food laws as not having been given by God, as 4:4 implies, even if they have now been surpassed with the coming of Christ—if indeed they have been for the historical Paul, who certainly never tells Jews that they are to stop keeping kosher?

Moreover, the insistence that all foods be consumed stands at clear tension with the advice of the real Paul himself to the Corinthians and Romans, where he urges restraint and abstention from certain foods for the sake of others (1 Cor. 8:9, 13; Rom. 14:20). By contrast, here in 1 Timothy the scruples of others are mocked and maligned. Everything is to be eaten, regardless—or rather, precisely in the face of—the objections of others. The logic and the grounds of the ethics of eating differ here, but that is precisely the point. Following the "apostle's" teaching is far more important than being concerned over causing another to stumble.

There are numerous other points that stand in tension with the historical Paul, as already noted. Spiritual charisma is received by the laying on of hands rather than at baptism (4:14); God is the savior "especially" to those who have faith (especially? 4:10); widows are to be enrolled in the church, showing that the church is becoming a social institution (5:9); the presbyteroi—a word and concept found nowhere in Paul—are rulers of the church who deserve to be paid (5:17–18); the written words of Jesus are now Scripture (1 Tim. 5:18; cf. 1 Tim. 6:3); and on and on. Again, a few of these comments—and there are many more like them—may be explained away in isolation as a sensible development from Paul. But it is the collocation of odd comments, in combination with so many other factors, that shows that this is a book written after Paul's demise, by someone living in a later context when the church is established and settling in for the long run.

2 Timothy

Even though 2 Timothy was written by the same hand as 1 Timothy, there are reasons for thinking that it was not meant to be read with it, as the second letter directed to the same situation. Unlike the other letter, where Timothy is Paul's delegate left in Ephesus for the organization—or at least the instruction—of the church (1 Tim. 1:3), there is nothing here to indicate that he is to be thought of in this light. In fact, 4:12 may speak against the idea (Paul has sent Tychicus to Ephesus). Nothing indicates that Timothy is to be regarded as Paul's delegate in charge of a community. He is portrayed instead as a young man who needs to work to combat his youthful passions (2:22). He has been Paul's faithful companion until now, and he is urged to come meet Paul in Rome soon, and to bring some of Paul's prized possessions with him (4:9, 13, 21), as Paul awaits a second trial (4:16).

As with 1 Timothy, there are numerous passages that sound Pauline. It is no wonder that scholars since Harrison have "found" authentically Pauline fragments in the letter. But more than anything else it is the abundance of verisimilitude that continues to puzzle scholars who are otherwise not intimately acquainted with the ancient craft of forgery, persuading them that surely this must be the real Paul himself. This author remembers Timothy in his prayers (1:3), he recalls his tears (1:4), he longs to see him (1:4); he remembers his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (1:5) and recalls how God's charisma was bestowed upon him by the laying on of hands (1:6); he refers to his enemies in Asia who have turned against him, citing two of them by name (1:15); but he indicates that Onesiphorus was faithful and came to find him in Rome after rendering him a service in Ephesus (1:16–18); he refers to other aspects of his past, including his persecutions at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (3:11); he himself is about to be sacrificed (4:6). And then comes the shower of verisimilitudes of 4:9–18, where the author cites names, places, and events from his life, thereby assuring the reader that he really is Paul, before the highly personalized greetings and benediction of 4:19–22.[31]

Given the comparative brevity of the letter, and the extent to which it is consumed with establishing the identity of the author through verisimilitude, it is no surprise that there are fewer passages that appear offensive to Pauline authorship here. But there are several that bear noting. Here again the spiritual gift is bestowed on Timothy by a leader of the community (in this case, Paul) laying on hands, rather than by the Spirit at baptism (1:6). The opponents of Paul are called by name, repeatedly (1:15: Phygelus and Hermogenes; 2:17: Hymenaeus and Philetus; 4:10: Demas; 4:14: Alexander). The love of money has become one of the issues in the community (3:2; cf. 1 Tim. 6:10), which seems

to suppose a more established and occasionally prosperous constituency.

In particular it is hard to understand how this letter—if authentic—could be understood as a directive to the young Timothy. Here the problem is not the general one of how to fit the Pastoral epistles into a sensible chronology of Paul's life as established on the basis of his letters and Acts. The problem is that Timothy is being portrayed as a young companion of Paul (as seen already in 2:22), who needs to be warned against the passions that commonly afflict the young. At the same time, Paul is portrayed as in prison in Rome, having stood trial once, and awaiting a second trial (4:16). The letter is often read as a "last will and testament" of Paul, prior to his death. And although this characterization is sometimes challenged—especially by those who want to urge that the letter is authentic, since often these testaments are produced as fictions after the death of the protagonist—there is clearly something to it. Paul is expecting another trial, and he is fully expecting to be sacrificed: "The moment of my departure has arrived." He knows he is about to be condemned and executed, but looking back on his life, he knows he has "fought the good fight" (4:6–7).

But how does one reconcile these two data with anything like a sensible chronology of Paul's life? Timothy is still a young man but Paul is at the end of his life? In the book of Acts Timothy becomes associated with Paul rather early on, in Lystra (Acts 16:1). He is already an adult then, and already a disciple of Jesus. He then accompanies Paul on his missionary journeys. In Paul's own letters Timothy is a coauthor of what is probably the earliest surviving correspondence, 1 Thessalonians—so presumably they have been together for some years, prior to its having been written in, say, 49 CE. Even if Timothy was a young man then—there is nothing to indicate that he was—how could he still be young fifteen years later when Paul, on any reasonable chronology, is face-to-face with death at the end of a relatively long and productive ministry? On any reckoning Timothy must have been at least middle-aged by then. But not for the author of 2 Timothy. This author, not concerned with working out a viable chronology from Acts, which he probably did not know, or with Paul's other letters, with which, for the purpose, he probably did not bother, portrays Paul in his final days, and Timothy as a youthful companion. The chronology does not seem to work.

Titus

Like the other two Pastoral epistles, the book of Titus contains numerous passages that reflect the views of the historical Paul. This again is no surprise, as the letter comes from the pen of a later follower who saw himself as standing in

the Pauline tradition. And here too there are a number of impressive verisimilitudes, especially in the closing, where the author urges his recipient to meet him at Nicopolis, where he has decided to spend the winter (3:12). Like the others, however, it also contains comments that are difficult to reconcile with the historical Paul.

We have already seen that the word *presbyteroi*—let alone the concept that it represents—is absent from Paul. Here, not only are there *presbyteroi*, but the recipient is urged to appoint *presbyteroi* in every town on Crete (1:5). This presupposes an amazingly successful mission on the island—were all the towns converted, with thriving Christian communities?—and also assumes that the churches were established and hierarchically organized. No Corinthian charismata here! And, as we have seen in other pseudo-Pauline writings, here too we find a Haustafel (2:2–10) for a community that is settled in for the long haul. The false teachers who have arisen within the communities are to be silenced, not argued with (1:9–11). The author himself offers no arguments against their deceptive "doctrine"; unlike Paul, he does not reason with them and show why they are wrong. He simply orders them to be rebuked for propounding "Jewish myths"—a strange injunction if from the real Paul, proud of his Jewish heritage.

But it is no stranger than the comment that follows, that "to the pure, all things are pure" (1:15). Is that why Jewish purity regulations and rules of kosher are no longer applicable, because they are rooted in foundationless Jewish mythology that now can be mocked, rather than revered for what it was, a set of good and true commandments given to God's chosen people to regulate their lives, at least before the coming of the messiah? Where in Paul are those who keep purity laws thought to be corrupt, unbelieving, detestable, and disobedient (1:15–16)? This does not appear to be Paul the Pharisee, "blameless with respect to the righteousness that is in the Law" (Phil. 3:6). On the contrary, this is an author who was once a slave to his passions and pleasures, who spent his days "filled with malice and envy, filled with hatred for others" (3:3). And now that he has been justified, this is one—contrast Paul—who simply refuses to engage in "stupid controversies" and "quarrels over the Law," deemed here as unprofitable and futile. Is this the author of Romans and Galatians?

There is some reason to suspect, on the other hand, that the author was intimately familiar with another Pauline letter, but this one too a forgery. The reminiscence of the author's former life in 3:3–8 sounds very much like an allusion to Ephesians 2:1–10, where "Paul" begins by outlining his former life as a pagan sinner (3:3; cf. Eph. 2:3), whom God has now "saved" (past tense! 3:5;

cf. Eph. 2:5), not because of “good deeds” (no word of “works of the Law” here, 3:5; cf. Eph. 2:9), through Jesus Christ, by “grace” (3:7; cf. Eph. 2:5, 8), so as to be an heir of eternal life (3:7; cf. Eph. 2:7). The author indicates that this “word” that he is delivering is “faithful” (3:8). Does he mean that he has self-consciously derived his “word” from what he (wrongly) thinks is an actual description of the conversion of Paul, in the equally pseudonymous letter to the Ephesians?

Counter-Arguments for Authenticity

Taken collectively or as individual letters, the Pastoral epistles thus have appeared to a strong majority of critics to be pseudepigraphic productions of a post-Pauline age. Yet, as noted, there have been spirited defenses of their complete, or partial, authenticity over the years.[32] The idea of partial authenticity was most convincingly floated by P. N. Harrison, in his classic study of 1921 previously mentioned. There was a clear and certain attraction to his proposal, that even though in their final form the Pastoral letters did not come from Paul, they were ultimately based on bona fide fragments of Pauline correspondence. Objections were eventually raised, however, and the theory was finally demolished by Cook, who showed that the alleged differences between source and redaction required by the theory in fact do not exist. There is a unity of theme and style throughout the books.[33]

Some scholars still find it difficult to believe that a forger would employ such extensive verisimilitudes as found, in particular, in the opening and closing of 2 Timothy.[34] The most direct attack on such views occurs in a justly acclaimed article by Norbert Brox, in which he makes a completely compelling case that “Fake personal notes are well known as stylistic devices in ancient pseudepigraphy and do not come as a surprise in the Pastoral epistles either.”[35]

Other scholars have wanted to insist that we take seriously the fact the most of Paul’s other letters were coauthored, and that, as a result, we should expect large differences in content and, especially, vocabulary and style, in comparison with letters, such as the Pastorals, that he produced himself. On the surface of the matter, this seems like a sensible objection, and certainly worth considering. One obvious problem is that the letters in question differ not only in choice of words and stylistic preferences, but also, quite seriously, in substance. Are we to think that Paul signed off on the content of the earlier letters without agreeing on what they actually had to say?

There is, however, a larger problem with the assertion that coauthored letters

will naturally differ from single-author letters. Where is the evidence? Luke Timothy Johnson has asserted that this solution can explain why the Pastorals may differ so much from the other Pauline letters.[36] But he offers not a shred of proof. This is odd for many reasons, not least of which is the fact that Johnson has made an outstanding career out of showing how parallels in the Greco-Roman environment can illuminate the writings of the New Testament in terms of genre, theme, vocabulary, rhetoric, and so on. The similarities of the New Testament literature with the literature of its surroundings provide lasting insights into its character and the force of its rhetoric. But when it comes to the Deutero-Pauline letters, Johnson wants to argue that the key to their interpretation is a phenomenon for which he cannot—or at least does not—cite a single parallel or analogy from antiquity: joint composition of letters (or in modern parlance, composition by committee). Why would this explanation for the distinctive character of the Deutero-Pauline letters be preferable to one for which there are abundant parallels and analogies scattered throughout all of antiquity, the use of literary forgery?

Something similar can be said of Michael Prior's use of the same argument in his study of 2 Timothy. Prior, at least, does try to find some evidence. After a diligent search, he locates some eighteen instances of coauthored letters from various ancient sources, mainly the papyri. After examining them, he then states "we have no way of knowing how the letters were composed, or what part each member of the coauthorship team played." That is precisely right: we literally have not a single clue. But then, in the very next sentence, Prior claims, "The indications are that the writers are on an equal footing."[37] But what indications would those be, if the examples do not give us any clues? Later, coming to the Pauline corpus, Prior asserts, "When seen against the background of ancient coauthored letters one would expect a real coauthorship for those letters."[38] Yet he provides no analysis of the "ancient coauthored letters" that would lead us to think that they should appear stylistically or materially different from single-authored letters.[39] This is a case made by assertion. If there is evidence to be adduced, then someone ought to adduce it. Until that happens, historians should be loath to accept as the "most probable" assertion one that has no demonstrable ancient analogy, in preference to what is abundantly attested in myriad places, that forgers produced works that differed stylistically and materially from those of the authors in whose name they wrote.

The Polemic of 2 Timothy

The polemical attack on false teachers is a prominent feature of all three Pastoral letters. By Johnson's count, 47 of the 242 verses of the books are involved with polemic.[40] As Donelson states, "all three letters are peppered with warnings about false teachers… [who] appear to be the immediate occasion for writing the letters."[41] The polemic is especially evident in 1 Timothy and Titus, as it appears at the very outset of each letter (1 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:9–16); and at its conclusion (1 Tim. 6:20–21; Tit. 3:9–11), with scattered references, then, throughout. 2 Timothy is also littered with polemical statements and warnings. The opening section ends with the exhortation to "guard the good deposit that comes from the Holy Spirit that dwells in you" (1:14). The author is concerned that his teachings be "entrusted to faithful ones" who can teach others as well (2:2). The heart of the body of the letter involves the specific issue of greatest concern to the author, the false teachings of those who insist that the "resurrection has already happened" (2: 14–19) to which we will return momentarily. The false teachers are to be corrected, but not engaged (2:23–26), as they promote the work of "the devil" (2:26). These opponents appear closely connected with (identical with?) the moral reprobates about to appear in the last days (3:1–9). Other eschatological warnings involve false teaching in se, as members of the congregation will not endure "healthy teaching" but follow teachings that they prefer, turning from the "truth" in order to "stray after myths." Already the opposition is in full force, as evidenced by Alexander who "strongly opposed our words" and thus did the author "great harm" (4:14–15).

As stressed repeatedly above, the facts that the Pastorals were probably written by the same hand and that all engage in polemics should not be taken to mean that the polemical target is the same in all three letters, any more than the opponents of Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and Philippians are necessarily all the same. No one today would (or should) think of creating an amalgamation of Paul's polemical statements in these three letters to create some kind of hybrid opponent who embodied the negative characteristics intimated in each. Why scholars have been so eager to do so with the Pastorals is a mystery. The resulting amalgam is usually some kind of otherwise unknown group of "Jewish Gnostics," or occasionally some other interesting mixed bag, such as Spicq's converted Jews who use rabbinic and Hellenistic modes of interpretation of Scripture and privilege the Torah.[42] This passion for conflation is virtually ubiquitous in the literature, from authors as wide ranging as Robert Karris, Günter Haufe, Josef Zmijewski, I. Howard Marshall, and Lewis Donelson.[43] The real problem with this approach is not simply that the resultant composite picture does not resemble any known teacher or group; the same could be said even of

unitary presentations of false teachers, such as that found in 3 Corinthians. The deeper problem is that there is in fact nothing in the letters themselves to make one think that the problems addressed in 2 Timothy are the same as those addressed in 1 Timothy and Titus, as scholars such as Johnson and Prior have recognized. As Murphy-O'Connor has stated the matter: "Nowhere has the assumption of the unity of the Pastorals been more pernicious than in treatments of the errors they oppose."[44]

Jerry Sumney has performed a particularly useful service of isolating the polemic of each of the letters and seeing from a minimalist view what each one has to say about the opponents.[45] Sumney can probably be faulted for being even too minimalist, in that he underreads some of the passages and does not see the close ties between 1 Timothy and Titus once the analysis is completed (every objection to the opponents of Titus can be found in 1 Timothy as well). I will later maintain that 1 Timothy and Titus are directed toward the same opponents. But nothing links them to the opponents addressed in 2 Timothy.

There are basic similarities in the unpleasant things said about the two groups. Like the opponents of the other Pastorals, those in 2 Timothy are full of vice (3:1–6); they dispute over words (2:14, 23); they are corrupted in mind and unproven in faith (3:8); and they turn aside to myths (4:4). There is nothing to indicate that these myths are Jewish teachings about the Law, as found in 1 Timothy and Titus. All of these polemical statements in fact are stock phrases that give us no real indication of what it is, exactly, these false teachers were teaching, a matter stressed years ago in an important article of Robert Karris.[46]

Other statements in the course of the polemic are more targeted and can provide us with some indication of who these false teachers were and what they proclaimed. For one thing, the author, in a clear departure from Pauline practice, actually names them. They are Hymenaeus and Philetus: persons, therefore, known, if only fictionally, to both the (fictional) audience and author. But since they are named, even if fictionally, it means that the author imagines the opposition to have arisen within the community among persons who are known. Moreover, some of the polemic directed against them is not simply undifferentiated slander. Since they are said to have swerved from the truth, they, again, are being conceived of as insiders, not external threats (2:18); so too the comment that they have been ensnared by the devil, which implies they had previously led an unensnared existence (2:26). What is more, they have misled others in the community (2:18), but they still have the chance to repent and come to know the truth (2:25). Most important is that their specific error is named directly: they maintain that "the resurrection has already happened"

τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἤδη γεγονέναι (2:18).

Hints that this was to be the problem with the false teaching came earlier, though they were left unflagged, especially in the pithy summary of the "Pauline credo" in 2:11–13, with its neat repetition of future tenses at the appropriate moments: "if we died with him [aorist] we also will live with him [future]; if we endure we will also reign with him [future]; if we should deny him, even that one will deny us [future]." Paul himself could scarcely have said it better, and one is right to suspect the influence of a passage such as Rom. 6:5, 8.

As we saw earlier, this very Pauline insistence that the believer's death with Christ, in baptism, was past, but the future resurrection with Christ is yet future, formed the heart of the polemic against Paul's opponents in Corinth, who appear to have believed that they had already experienced the benefits of the resurrection in the present.[47] The irony, as we also saw, is that the later authors of Colossians and, especially, Ephesians appear to have developed their views precisely along the lines of these opponents of Paul in Corinth. As the author of Colossians expresses it, "You who were dead in the transgressions and uncircumcision of the flesh, God made you alive with him (aorist: συνεζωοποίησεν; 2:13; cf. the future συζήσομεν in 2 Tim. 2:11); or, as Ephesians states the matter yet more emphatically, "Even though we were dead in transgressions, he made us alive in Christ (same word in the aorist: συνεζωοποίησεν), and he raised us (aorist: συνήγειρεν) and seated us (aorist: συνεκάθισεν) in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5–6).[48]

This is not a peripheral matter for any of these authors. Paul himself is quite emphatic that the death with Christ is a past event for those who have been baptized, but the resurrection with Christ is not to be thought of until Christ himself returns from heaven and the transformation of the mortal body takes place. That is clearly asserted in Romans 6 and stressed in 1 Corinthians 15. The reason for the emphasis in the latter passage is that it is directly related to Paul's opponents. Within his own community at Corinth the opposition was conceivably claiming his proclamation in support: nothing indicates that they saw themselves as standing in opposition to him or as outside of the tradition which he began. The writers of Colossians and Ephesians, like the opponents in Corinth, have also taken a Pauline datum—in Christ "all things are new" (see 2 Cor. 5:17)—and moved it in a non-Pauline direction, insisting that the resurrection had already occurred, even if there was more yet to come. But believers are already raised with Christ and are ruling with him in the heavenly places. They already are enjoying the benefits of the resurrected existence. The resurrection has occurred for those who are in Christ.

This in turn is just the position that the author of 2 Timothy opposes. The resurrection is not a past spiritual event. It is a future physical one. Those who think the eschatological moment is past have been ensnared by a false, non-Pauline teaching. They may deliver an attractive perspective, but it will lead people astray. The polemic against people engaging in vice (3:1–6)—standard and stock as it is—may be germane here. Throughout proto-orthodox polemic against firmly realized eschatology one sees the logic, not that the opponents used, but that the polemic demands: the devaluing of the physical life in the flesh is connected with abuses of the flesh.

What is particularly intriguing is the circumstance that, as we have already seen, this author appears to be familiar with "Paul's" letter to the Ephesians. The evidence derives not only from the previously discussed restatement of Eph. 2:1–10 in Tit. 3:3–8, but also from 2 Timothy, as it is widely, and with good reason, thought that 4:12 (I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus) betrays knowledge of Eph. 6:21–22 ("Tychicus … will tell you everything; I have sent him to you"). If so, this is yet another indication, as if more is needed, that 2 Timothy is forged. Paul himself could scarcely have been expected to rely on a pseudepigraphon produced in his name.

But even if the author of 2 Timothy found Ephesians of some use for his own letter, he stood directly opposed to the eschatology that it presented. One might well suspect that what we have here is a correction of an earlier "aberrant" view in circulation in Paul's name, written, allegedly, by the apostle himself. It should be recalled that the author of 2 Timothy indicates that the eschatological error arose among Paulinists within the Pauline community, among people who, evidently, claimed Pauline support. At least this much can be said for the author of Ephesians. But the later Paulinist resisted this strain of Pauline thought by embracing another, one which, as it turns out, could find clear support in letters later judged by scholars to be orthonymous. The end has not come; the resurrection has not occurred. On the contrary (this is where the author differs from Paul himself), the church needs to settle in for the long haul, and establish itself as an efficiently working community characterized by "true" teaching.

The possibility that 2 Timothy presents us with a counterforgery was recognized already by Lindemann.[49] The author of the book does not provide us with a vague rejection of some kind of fantasized Gnostic teaching of the resurrection. He opposes a teaching that had arisen within the circles that the author himself is addressing, Pauline communities that had taken Paul's teaching of the "new creation" in Christ in the wrong direction and to a false extreme, in arguing that the resurrection is a spiritual event that had already occurred. For

the author of 2 Timothy, this is non-Pauline, devilish, and wrong. The resurrection is a future event, yet to be experienced, notwithstanding "Pauline" letters, such as Ephesians, that indicate otherwise.

EXCURSUS: THE SECRETARY HYPOTHESIS

Now that we have explored six of the Deutero-Pauline epistles, we are in a position to consider the hypothesis widely invoked by advocates of authenticity to explain how a letter allegedly by an author should differ so radically from other writings he produced. The notion that early Christian authors used secretaries who altered the writing style and contributed to the contents of a writing—thereby creating the anomalies that arouse the critics' suspicion—is so widespread as to be virtually ubiquitous. There is no need here to cite references; one need only consult the commentaries, not only on the Pauline corpus but on 1 and 2 Peter as well. At the same time, almost no one who invokes the secretary hypothesis sees any reason to adduce any evidence for it. Instead, it is simply widely assumed that since authors used secretaries—as Paul, at least, certainly did (Rom. 16:22; Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11)—these otherwise unknown persons contributed not only to the style of a writing but also to its contents. There is a good reason that commentators who propose the hypothesis so rarely cite any evidence to support it. The ancient evidence is very thin, to the point of being nonexistent.

The fullest study is by E. Randolph Richards, who is to be commended for combing all the literary sources and papyri remains in order to uncover everything that can reasonably be said about secretaries and their functions in the Roman world during our period.[50] He explores every reference and allusion in the key authors: Cicero, Pliny, Plutarch, Suetonius, and so on. He plows through all the relevant material remains from Oxyrhynchus and elsewhere. It is a full and useful study, valuable for its earnest attempt to provide the fullest accounting of evidence possible. Somewhat less commendable are the conclusions that Richards draws, at times independently of this evidence.

Richards maintains that secretaries in antiquity could function in four ways: as recorders of dictation; as copy editors who modified an author's style; as coauthors who contributed both style and content; and as composers who produced a letter from scratch, at the instruction of the "author."

The first category is both abundantly attested in the sources and completely nonproblematic. Secretaries often took dictation, either syllabatim or, if they had the requisite tachygraphic skills, viva voce. If Paul dictated a letter like Romans,

his secretary Tertius simply wrote down what he was told, making himself known only in his somewhat temerarious insertion of 16:22. Otherwise he recorded the words as Paul spoke them. Whether Paul was composing orally or dictating from written drafts is another question, but of no relevance to the present issue. The words on the page are the words Paul spoke, in his style.

It is with the second category that the significance and the evidence begin to move in opposite directions. If secretaries regularly edited the dictations they received, possibly taking down a draft by dictation and then reworking it into a style they preferred, then all sorts of options would open up for early Christian writings deemed pseudepigraphic on stylistic grounds. The differences between Colossians and the undisputed Paulines could be explained, as would the discrepancies between 1 and 2 Peter. What, then, is the evidence? And is it directly relevant?

Unlike the first category, the evidence that secretaries routinely reworked letters for style is very thin indeed. All of it derives from the very upper reaches of the Roman highest classes, among authors who used highly educated and skilled writers in helping them produce their correspondence. There is a serious question of how such data are relevant for a completely different social context, with the impoverished and lower-class authors of the Christian writings. Still, it is worth noting that Cicero, at least, appears to have allowed Tiro on occasion to assist him in stylistically shaping his letters. And Cicero suggests that the secretary of Atticus, Alexis, may have helped him similarly.[51] Moreover, Cicero speaks of one letter of Pompey that appears to have been written (or rewritten?) instead by Sestius, and intimates that Sestius wrote other writings in his name (mildly castigating Pompey for this proceeding).[52] Finally, there is an off-the-cuff comment in the handbook on style by Philostratus that the letters of Brutus may have been stylized by the secretary he used. This is not so much evidence for the historical Brutus (from three hundred years earlier) as evidence of what would have seemed culturally plausible in this later period.[53]

This evidence is notably sparse, but it does indicate that a secretary would occasionally edit an author’s letter stylistically. Could this not explain, then, why Colossians differs so significantly (in style) from the other Pauline letters? Or why 1 and 2 Peter are so different from one another? Several points should be stressed. First, as already mentioned, the evidence all derives from fabulously wealthy, highly educated, upper-class elites with very highly trained secretaries. We have no evidence at all for the kinds of letters being dictated by a Paul, or, even more, by an illiterate Aramaic-speaking peasant such as Peter.[54] Second, the kinds of writings in question may be incommensurate. The vast majority of

letters in Greco-Roman antiquity were very short and to the point. The letters of the papyri appear to average fewer than a hundred words; at the other end of the spectrum, letters of Cicero averaged around three hundred words, Seneca's around a thousand. The letters of Paul are much longer, on average about twenty-five hundred words.[55] What really matters, however, is not simply length, but complexity. The Christian letters we have examined so far in this study are not simply pieces of correspondence: they are complicated theological and paranetic treatises, with interwoven themes and subthemes, and intricate modes of argumentation, written in letter form. Apart from purely formal features (address, thanksgiving, body, closing, etc.) they are simply not like typical Greco-Roman letters, precisely because of what happens in the "body." What evidence is there that secretaries were ever given the freedom to rewrite this kind of letter—an extended treatise in letter form—in accordance with their preferred style? As far as I know, there is no evidence.

This latter point relates to the third. The kinds of "minor corrective editing" that Richards finds, for example, in the case of Tiro and Cicero[56] is far removed from the complete rewriting of the letters that would have been necessary to make an Ephesians or Colossians come in any sense from the hand of Paul. Here there are wholesale changes of style at every point. Where is the evidence that copy editing ever went to this extreme? If any exists, Richards fails to cite it.

Finally, it should be noted that in none of the instances we have considered so far, and in none of the ones we will consider throughout this study, are questions of style the only features of the letter that have led scholars to suspect forgery. The most definitive demonstration of a non-Pauline style comes with Colossians, and even there it was the content of the letter that confirmed that it was not written by Paul. Moreover, it should be stressed that the person actually writing the letter also repeatedly claims not to be a secretary but to be Paul himself ("I, Paul").

It is Richards's third and fourth categories that are particularly germane to the questions of early Christian forgery. What is the evidence that secretaries were widely used, or used at all, as coauthors of letters or as ersatz composers? If there is any evidence that secretaries sometimes joined an author in creating a letter, Richards has failed to find or produce it. The one example he considers involves the relationship of Cicero and Tiro, cited earlier by Gordon Bahr as evidence for coauthorship. In Bahr's words "Tiro took part in the composition of the letter."[57] But Richards points out that Bahr cites no evidence to support this claim, opting instead simply to assert the conclusion. Moreover, there is nothing stylistically in the Ciceronian correspondence to suggest a coauthorship.

Richards concludes that at most Tiro sometimes engaged in “minor corrective editing.” What is oddest in Richards’ discussion, however, is the conclusion that he draws, once he discounts the evidence of Cicero, the one and only piece of evidence he considers: “Evidently then,… secretaries were used as coauthors.”[58] It is not at all clear what makes this view “evident,” given the circumstance that he has not cited a solitary piece of evidence for it.

There is better evidence that an author would sometimes commission someone else to write a letter in his name. This typically happened among the illiterate, who would hire a scribe for any necessary written communications. But this involved stock letters and documents, stereotyped and brief, of no relevance to the situation we are addressing with the early Christian pseudepigrapha. What about longer letters of some substance? Here there is at least some evidence, although all of it is connected with one author (out of how many?), Cicero. At one time Cicero asks Atticus “to write in my name to Basilius and to anyone else you like, even to Servilius, and say whatever you think fit.” And in doing so he even urges Atticus to employ a deceit: “If they look for [my missing] signature or handwriting, say that I have avoided them because of the guards.”[59] In addition to these passages, Richards places a good deal of weight on a letter of Rufus, a friend of Cicero who had promised to write him during his exile of 51 CE with news of Rome. Rufus indicates that he was too busy to fulfill his promise, and so “delegated the task to another.”[60] This was a long and involved communication, and so is more like, in some respect, the lengthy letters of the early Christians we have been considering.

The problem is that the passage does not say what Richards says it says. Rufus never claims that he had someone else compose the account *in his own name*. He simply had someone else compose the account. That, of course, is a different matter altogether.[61]

And so, from all of antiquity, we are left with a few references to a secretary composing a letter in connection with Cicero. These references show that Cicero realized the practice was deceitful (he instructs Atticus to lie about the matter). Moreover, the correspondence involved short, stereotypical letters, not complex treatises in letter form. But is the evidence sufficient to establish a typical practice in antiquity of secretary-composed writings? Richards himself does not think so, as he repeatedly emphasizes: “Nowhere was there *any* indication that an ordinary secretary was asked, much less presumed, to compose a letter for the author…. [O]ne cannot assume that [Cicero’s] use of such a questionable secretarial method is indicative of an acceptable custom of the day… [T]his secretarial method probably should not even be considered a valid option.”[62]

What, on balance, is the evidence to support the secretary hypothesis to explain the early Christian pseudepigrapha? That secretaries took dictation in a variety of ways is clear and certain. This creates no problem for authorship: the author delivered an oral communication that was written down word-for-word by an amanuensis who simply performed the task of recording. In addition, on rare occasions members of the upper-crust elite used their resources to hire highly literate secretaries to copyedit their letters in places. There is no evidence that this ever happened in other cultural settings, with, say, the poorer lower classes. Moreover, there is not a shred of evidence, at least none that Richards has been able to locate, to indicate that secretaries sometimes coauthored a letter. What is the evidence that secretaries actually composed letters in another person's name? Apart from a completely different phenomenon—the use of a scribe by illiterate persons to produce documents (wills, land deeds, sales contracts, etc.) or very brief stereotyped communications—the evidence appears to be limited to a few instances from the end of the life of Cicero, who admits that the practice involved a deceit, that is, that it was tantamount to forgery, willingly engaged in because of the impossible constraints placed upon his time.

In sum, what might we conclude about the evidence for the secretary hypothesis put forth by commentators wanting to affirm the authenticity of the Deutero-Pauline or Petrine letters of the New Testament? It is thin at best, almost nonexistent. Why then is the hypothesis so universally invoked? If it is not because of the evidence, it must be for other reasons, and one can only suspect that it involves wishful thinking. History, however, proceeds on the basis of evidence. What evidence exists, on the other hand, for the contrary position, that ancient authors forged writings in the names of other well known persons, not successfully replicating their style and producing anomalous content? That kind of evidence can be found all over the map. Scholars must constantly ask themselves whether evidence matters, that is, whether they prefer history or romance.

SECOND PETER

To this point we have considered only Deutero-Pauline letters in our query into forgeries produced to counter eschatological views that were deemed aberrant. "Aberrant" eschatology affected other writings as well, into the second century, including one that is distantly related to Paul, not because he is claimed as its author, but because its pseudonymous author, "Peter," appealed to Paul's support in opposition to the false eschatological teachings he addressed. The book of 2

Peter is a polemical treatise written to oppose Christians who maintained that there would be no future apocalyptic moment in which Jesus would return to right all that was wrong with the world. Unlike the "Pauline" letters we have considered so far, there is very little debate in this instance concerning authorship. More than any other New Testament writing, 2 Peter is widely recognized to be forged, even among scholars otherwise loath to admit the presence of pseudonymous works within the canon of Scripture.

2 Peter as Forgery

2 Peter is among the least well attested works of the New Testament from Christian antiquity, although it is found already in P^{72}, ca. 300 CE, along with 1 Peter and Jude, the two canonical letters with which it is most closely associated. Still, during the first four centuries the book had an unsettled status among those interested in establishing the contours of the New Testament. Origen doubted its authenticity, in words quoted by Eusebius: "Peter … left us one acknowledged epistle, possibly two—though this is doubtful" (*H.E.* 6.25.8). Eusebius himself also considered 1 Peter genuine, but rejected 2 Peter, even though, as he notes, some readers have found it valuable: "Of Peter, one epistle, known as his first, is accepted, and this the early fathers quoted freely, as undoubtedly genuine…. But the second Petrine epistle we have been taught to regard as uncanonical" (*H.E.* 3.3.1). Somewhat later Jerome expressed the opinion of his day: "[Peter] wrote two epistles which are called Catholic, the second of which, on account of its difference from the first in style, is considered by many not to be his."[63] Most emphatic was Didymus the Blind, who indicated, "We must therefore not be ignorant of the fact that the epistle at hand is forged, which, even though published, is nevertheless not in the canon."[64]

Those modern scholars who do not share this concern with establishing the contours of the canon nonetheless agree with these ancient assessments of 2 Peter and often use the same faulty logic in support, that the book differs so significantly from 1 Peter that it could not have been written by the same author.[65] The flaw in the logic, as we will see, is that Peter probably did not write the first epistle either, so that variations from it say nothing, per se, about whether he wrote the second. Nonetheless, there are compelling reasons for thinking that 2 Peter came into existence long after the death of Jesus' disciple, and that it is simply one of a stack of a books that eventually appeared in his name. Still extant are the Gospel of Peter, the Epistula Petri of the Pseudo-Clementines, the Letter of Peter to Philip from Nag Hammadi, three apocalypses

of Peter—all falsely claiming to be written by the great apostle. We will later see that Peter could not have written any of these books (no one, of course, claims that he did); but I will reserve that discussion for my assessment of 1 Peter, the one book scholars have been most inclined to consider authentic.

The grounds for considering 2 Peter a forgery are varied and numerous. The first has to do with the quality of the Greek. Even if we assume that Peter could write in Greek, an assumption I will challenge in the chapter that follows, it seems highly doubtful that he could have written Greek like this.[66] The style is widely assessed as overly elaborate, and the vocabulary is excessively rich. As Bauckham puts it, the author is "fond of literary and poetic, even obscure words."[67] This is not what one would expect of an Aramaic-speaking peasant.[68] By Elliott's count, there are proportionally more hapax legomena in 2 Peter than in any other writing of the New Testament: 58 of its 402 words (14.4 percent).[69]

In addition, there are the clear indications that the book was written in a later period, after the death of the apostles. Most obviously, it was written in order to deal with the massive delay of the parousia: there had been a long passage of time since Christians widely held to the expectation of an imminent end of all things, a problem dealt with in a variety of ways by other postapostolic writings, such as Luke-Acts and the Fourth Gospel. In particular we are told that "the fathers" have "fallen asleep" (i.e., died) since the original promises of the coming end (3:4). Moreover, when the author is speaking in character, he feigns a knowledge of his own approaching death, based in part on a prediction of Jesus himself (1:12–14; see, for example the post-Petrine John 21:18–19 as well), giving this book, as widely recognized, the character of a testamentary fiction.[70] He "knows" of his impending death and wants to give his readers his final instructions. As with all Testaments, this is a fiction put on the pen of someone already residing comfortably in his tomb.

Moreover, the author's knowledge of earlier Christian texts indicates that he was writing after the death of Peter. Most obviously, he makes extensive use of the letter of Jude. By Elliott's count, nineteen of Jude's twenty-five verses reappear in modified form in 2 Peter.[71] We will later see clear reasons for thinking that Jude was not produced by Jesus' brother, but is a forgery in his name written at a relatively late time, by someone looking back on the apostolic age. 2 Peter is, as a consequence, later still. Moreover, the author clearly knows of 1 Peter, as seen not only in what appears to be an explicit reference ("This, now, my beloved, is the second letter I have written to you", 3:1) but also in numerous similarities, to be mentioned later. I will be arguing in the next chapter that 1 Peter is forged; that would necessarily make 2 Peter a forgery as well.

Equally striking, and widely noted, is the fact that this author already knows of a collection of Paul's letters (not just one or two in isolation), and that he is living at a time when Christians were already considering these letters to be Scripture (3:15–16). It is hard to imagine any such situation before the end of the first century, at best.

Finally, nothing that we know about the historical Peter as a Jewish missionary to Jews who continued to uphold the Law is true of this letter (e.g., Galatians 2). There is, in fact, nothing Jewish about it. The reference to the false teachers who emerged from the community as those who had earlier escaped τὰ μιάσματα suggests they started out as pagans, not Jews (2:20). And the use of Scripture bears no relation to what we would suspect of a law-abiding believer like Peter. It is true that he speaks of the prophecy of Scripture (1:20); but even if he is referring to Jewish Scripture (as opposed to the writings of Christians that, like Paul's letters, are considered Scripture), there is nothing to suggest that the Law continues to be in force. On the contrary Scripture is read in a completely presentist way. The examples cited of disobedience in Scripture are merely illustrative of how God works. And there is no injunction to follow the dictates of Scripture. Quite the contrary, it is standard, high morals, not the works of the Law, that matter to this author.

It became common in Petrine forgeries to relate firsthand experiences with Jesus, a ploy that makes considerable sense: why else claim to be Jesus' right-hand man, if you cannot appeal to the authority that experience provides? And so the author of 1 Peter states that he was a "witness to the sufferings of Christ" (5:1). So too, the author of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter claims to have observed the crucifixion of Jesus, somewhat oddly, while conversing with Christ on a hill nearby. And the author of the Greek Apocalypse of Peter, also on a hill, is taken by Jesus himself on a guided tour of the realms of the blessed and the damned.

The ironies in the case of 2 Peter in particular are nonetheless striking. This author insists that he was present at the transfiguration precisely in order to validate the status of his authority: his views, he avers, are not based on fictions (as opposed to the false teachers he opposes) but on facts and personal experiences (1:16–18). Yet this claim itself is a fiction written by a forger who has invented the tale of the personal experience, as recognized by J. Frey.[72] Moreover, this assertion of factual authority is used precisely in order to oppose the ψευδοπροφῆται and the ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι (2:1–3) who revile "the truth" and teach "false words"—all this in a ψευδεπίγραφον,, a writing that is "inscribed with a lie" written by someone who deceives his readers about his own authoritative

credentials. Rarely in early Christian texts do we find irony so exquisite.

The Polemical Function of the Forgery

In the next chapter I will argue that both the explicit reference to the letters of Paul as Scripture and the numerous resonances with Pauline thought in 2 Peter are not incidental to the polemical purposes of the letter but are, in fact, a fundamental component of them. For the purposes of the present chapter, it is enough to note the severity of the polemic and its centrality to the letter. The letter is, in fact, entirely polemical, directed against "false teachers" from within the community who adopt eschatological views counter to those received by the author from the early Christian apocalyptic tradition. The heart of the letter (virtually all of chapters 2 and 3) is directed to this polemic, and it is important to recognize that the charges of licentiousness that dominate chapter 2 are tied from the outset to the false teachings (2:1, "destructive heresies" that revile "the way of truth" and involve "false words"). In other words, the opponents are not simply unprincipled reprobates; they are false teachers whose errant views have, in the author's opinion, led to lascivious behavior. This connection between false teaching and immorality is reconfirmed in the author's antidote, which involves "holy and pious conduct" rooted in a correct understanding of eschatology (3:11–13). The idea that bad theology led to unconscionable behavior was to become standard fare among proto-orthodox heresiologists in the decades and centuries to follow.[73] And indeed, much of what the author says about his opponents involves stock polemic: they deny the Master; they secretly bring in heresies; they are licentious; they lead to the reviling of truth; they are greedy; they exploit with false words; they are sure to be destroyed; they despise authority; they are wild, dissipated, carousers.

With stereotypes such as these, we are handcuffed in trying to identify the opponents, if in fact there was some kind of actual, historical group lying behind the polemic. It may bear noting that the author's opposition to them resonates with later attacks on various Gnostic groups. His adversaries appeal to knowledge but are "without knowledge" (ἀγνοοῦσιν; 2:12); they urge freedom from bodily constraints (passim); they "revile the glorious ones" (comparable to Gnostic denigration of the world creators? 2:10); they base their views on myths rather than historical verities (1:16). But in the end, such charges cannot contribute significantly to any firm identification. Only two features of the opposition appear clear from the polemic leveled against them: the author insists that they are enemies who have emerged from within the Christian community,

and they endorse false eschatological views.

As to the first point, 2:20 and 3:15–16 seem decisive. The opponents had formerly “escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” but then they “became entangled in them again and were worse off than before.” Obviously the opponents did not see themselves in this light, and may well have been amazed at the charges of immorality and licentious behavior leveled against them. But it appears that these enemies, at least as portrayed by the forger, have developed views at variance with the “original” teaching, and they have done so based on their interpretation of the letters of Paul, which they, as “ignorant and unstable” persons, “twist as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.” In other words, these are Christian Scripture scholars who have interpreted Paul in a way that this author finds offensive and scandalous.

This misuse of Paul coincides with a general approach to authority by the false teachers, as portrayed by their enemy, the forger of the letter. That the issue is authority is clear already in 1:20, where the author insists that the prophecies “of Scripture” are not a matter of private, personal exposition (ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως). Prophecy came not from human θέλημα; it came from the Spirit of God. Presumably, then, human interpretations of prophecy—such as those practiced by the enemy—are strictly verboten. Here we seem to have an adumbration of modern hermeneutical debates, as this author simply wants the texts in question to “speak for themselves,” since, after all, they are divinely inspired and can only be corrupted when humans apply their minds to them.

The teachings of prophetic scripture are consistent with the teachings of Jesus (3:2) and naturally of his apostles (3:2), especially “our brother Paul” (3:15). Since these are the writings explicitly invoked (though never quoted), is the author imagining that it was specifically the Christian prophets who were “moved by the holy spirit” and so “spoke from God” (1:21)? If so, the reference to “the rest of the Scriptures” (τὰς λοιπὰς γραφάς, 3:16) may be referring, as Lindemann has suggested, to Christian writings, rather than the “Old Testament.”[74] Or, it may be, as in the standard interpretation, that the author is simply equating the two sets of writings in authority. In either event, the author positions two sets of indubitable authority against the fallacious reasonings of his opponents: (1) the clear meaning of authoritative texts when read without human sophistry, and (2) his own voice, as one who does not follow myths but knows the truth whereof he speaks since he, unlike they, was an actual companion of Jesus and beheld his glory on the holy mountain.

As pointed out, there are numerous connections between chapters 2 and 3, in

which the "teaching" (the "destructive heresy") is tied to the "morality," attacked in notoriously vague but consistently nasty terms in chapter 2, terms that are largely drawn from the book of Jude. One would be hard-pressed indeed to reconstruct the teaching of the opponents from the invective directed against them in the earlier polemic : "irrational animals … blaspheming in things about which they have no knowledge … who consider it pleasure to revel during the day…. blots and blemishes who revel in their dissipated lives…. eyes full of adultery, incessantly in sin" and so on (2:12–14). To learn what the opponents actually say the reader needs to wait for chapter 3. The content of the false teaching is not that Christians need to be licentious. It is that the apocalyptic end proclaimed by Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles is not to be expected. It is this anti-apocalyptic view that leads, in the author's opinion, to the immoral lifestyle of the enemies, possibly on the logic that if the end is not coming soon, there is plenty of time to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh, an argument that the opponents, if they actually existed, may have found astonishing.

The specific teaching of these "mockers" (3:3) is posed in terms of their blasphemous question and the implication they draw from it: "Where is the promise of his parousia? For since the fathers fell asleep, everything remains just as it was at the beginning of creation." The question has to do with the return of Jesus. There is no sign of it happening. The "fathers" must be the fathers of the church, the early Christian leaders who have all died, possibly in expectation that the end would occur within their own lifetimes. Rather than concede that these fathers were wrong, the opponents have interpreted their writings ("the letters of Paul… and the rest of the writings") in such a way as to show they were not, in fact, in error, because they did not predict a literal parousia of Jesus. It is not the fathers who have erred; it is the Christian group represented by the author of this rebuttal, 2 Peter, the group who has held on to the belief that an apocalyptic crisis was still imminent and who insisted that this had been the teaching of Jesus and his apostles all along (3:2). For the opponents this was not the proclamation of Jesus or the teaching of his apostles, and certainly not the teaching found in the letters of Paul. The end is not coming right away and it is not coming in the way sometimes proclaimed. These nonapocalyptic opponents claimed that their view had been the view of Jesus, his apostles, and Paul.

Such Christians could certainly find support for their view in earlier Christian writings, as amply attested in the few that still survive. The apocalyptic message proclaimed by the Jesus of Mark, some forty years after the founding of the new faith, came to be muted in Luke; by the time of John it came practically to disappear. As we will see shortly, it is polemicized against in the still later

Gospel of Thomas. Not just Jesus but also Paul went through a radical de-apocalypticizing transformation at the hands of his later followers, as we have seen already, for example, in the letters of Colossians and, even more, Ephesians. This transformation continued in some Pauline circles of the second century, as among those Paulinists opposed in the Acts of Paul are those who declared that the resurrection is not a future, physical event: people are resurrected in their children, here, in this life.[75] We do not know if the opponents of 2 Timothy took this, or some similar line, but they too appear to have claimed Pauline support for their views that "the resurrection is past" (2 Tim. 2:18).

Pauline Christianity, much like Christianity at large, was enormously split on numerous issues, including this matter of eschatology. It was the nonapocalyptic view that eventually came to dominate within broader Christendom. It is no accident that the book of Revelation had such difficulty finding a place among the books of Scripture. Later chiliasts who believed in a literal millennium on earth, such as the early-second-century Papias, came to be mocked by writers such as Eusebius, who labeled his proto-orthodox forebear a man of "very little intelligence" (*H.E.* 3.39). The harsh words were directed against Papias not because he was, in fact, stupid, but because he was foolish enough to believe that there would be a utopian existence here on earth to be brought by an apocalyptic crisis at the end of the age. In other words, he was fool enough to agree with early Christian preaching.

So too did the author of 2 Peter. Was this one of the reasons this book too eventually had difficulty making it into the canon of Scripture? For this author, God created this world by his word and destroyed it with water (3:5–6). Next it will be destroyed by fire (3:7). The author adumbrates his view earlier in his short epistle, as when he refers to the (true) believers' "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1:11) and in his abundant stress on the coming of real and palpable judgment on the false teachers throughout chapter 2. But it is in his reasoned response of 3:8 :-15 that he sets forth views that contrast with the "destructive heresies" of his opponents. As proclaimed by Jesus and his apostles (3:2, 15–16) the end really is coming "soon." But temporal proximity is determined by a divine, not a human, calendar. And as Scripture teaches (Ps. 90:4), with the Lord a day is fully commensurate with a thousand years. There has been a (seeming) delay only because of God's forbearance, giving everyone a chance to repent. But the "Day of the Lord" is coming, like a thief, and it will involve a total, all encapsulating cosmic destruction (3:10, 12). In expectation of this apocalyptic moment, the true believers need to live in godly and pious ways (3:11).

In taking this stand, the author placed himself securely in the tradition that he understood to have stemmed from the apocalyptic proclamation of Jesus and his apostles, among whom he numbered himself. In order to provide particularly strong authorization for his views, he claimed to have seen firsthand the glory of Jesus, a glory that foreshadowed one yet to be revealed, on the "Day of the Lord," when destruction would come to this world. His views, in other words, were not simply those that stood within a noble tradition. They derived from the foundation of the church. The church is rooted in Scriptural prophecies, which anticipate a coming destruction, in the teachings of Jesus himself, and in the writings of Paul. This author was allegedly a companion of Jesus and a fellow apostle of Paul. As opposed to the "mockers" who have proclaimed a nonapocalyptic view of the faith, he writes to assure his readers that a clear and definite end is coming, and that it will be brutal, especially for those who think otherwise. These are "lying prophets" (ψευδοπροφῆται) and lying teachers (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι).. And the author has no scruples at all about telling a lie of his own, by writing a ψευδεπίγραφον,, in order to attack the teachers of falsehood.[76]

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

As a final example of a forgery written, in part, to correct false eschatological notions, we can turn to the Gospel of Thomas. Unlike the other books we have considered, the Gospel of Thomas does not connect itself with the teachings of Paul; indeed, its eschatological views can be read as a rejection of Paul.

No one thinks the book was authentically produced by Didymus Judas Thomas. The name is known throughout Syriac traditions. "Judas Thomas" appears in the Syriac translation of John 14:22 (for "Judas not Iscariot"), in the Abgar legends that we will consider later, and especially in the fabricated Acts of Thomas. In that narrative of Thomas's missionary exploits there is no doubt concerning whose twin ("Didymus"/"Thomas") he is; the circumstance that he and his brother Jesus look just alike makes possible some of the most entertaining moments of the plot. Outside of the prologue of the Gospel, the author makes no use of the name (except saying 13, where it is not a self-designation and is probably a reference to a different Thomas). But the prologue is enough. The words that "the living Jesus" spoke are written by Didymus Judas Thomas. What greater authorization do these sayings need? They come from the pen of Jesus' own twin. Who better to know the secrets that can provide life eternal (saying 1)?

There are numerous themes developed throughout the collection, but as

frequently noted, it is no accident that anti-apocalyptic sayings occur near the very beginning (saying 3) and the very end (saying 113), bracketing the whole. Five sayings altogether are particularly germane, and all five point in the same direction. This author, writing falsely in the name of Jesus' brother, insists, on his brother's authority, that there is to be no apocalyptic crisis at the end of the age to usher in God's good kingdom. The kingdom of God is here already, both within those who understand the secret teachings of Jesus and spread throughout the earth, for those who can see. Whether or not this view stands in direct tension with the apocalyptic teachings of the real, historical Jesus, as the majority of scholars continue to hold, they certainly stand at odds with the apocalyptic proclamation of his early apostles, such as Paul. The Gospel of Thomas was written, in some measure, to promote a nonapocalyptic eschatology and to polemicize against Christians who maintained that there was a future, physical kingdom yet to come to earth. To that extent the eschatology of the collection appears to be much more in line with the views opposed by two of the forgeries we have already considered, 2 Timothy and 2 Peter, and closer to the views advocated by traditions now found in the falsely ascribed Gospel of John, where eternal life, for the most part, is portrayed as a present reality for those who believe in Jesus (thus 3:17–19, 36; 5:24; 11:25–27; etc.). In John, however, there continues to be some element of eschatological reserve in that it contains passages, possibly undigested fragments from earlier traditions, that still allow there will be a future apocalyptic event (5:25–29). Not so in the Gospel of Thomas. The kingdom is here and now; it is not a future, physical event to be anticipated.

Saying 3

The attack on an apocalyptic eschatology appears at the outset in saying 3. The saying presents a number of problems of text[77] and translation[78] that need not detain us here. T. F. Glasson has plausibly argued that it is to be understood as a midrash on Deut. 30:10–25 that establishes a connection between commandments, wisdom, and the reign of God within.[79] In any event, that the interpretation is advanced polemically is obvious: it is directed against "those who lead you," who maintain that the kingdom is a physical place that can be entered. This view is parodied: Is it in the sky? Is it in the sea? No, the kingdom is not a place that can be entered. "Rather, the kingdom of heaven is inside of you and outside" (ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστι κἀκτός)..[80]

The tie to Luke 17:20–21 is obvious: "the kingdom of God is among you"

(again: ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν). But the Thomasine saying differs significantly, at least from the way in which the logion appears in its broader Lukan context. There, Jesus is asked by the Pharisees—understood to be the enemy—when, not where, the kingdom is to come. Jesus replies that it will not come with observable signs, so that no one will be able to say "here it is or there." Instead, for Luke, the kingdom of God is in your midst. In this case ἐντός cannot mean "within" you, as it does in Thomas; Jesus is scarcely telling his opponents that they themselves have the kingdom "in their hearts." No, for Luke the kingdom of God is present among them because it is manifest already in the ministry of Jesus. Thus, elsewhere Luke indicates that the kingdom of God has "come near" (10:9, 11) and in Jesus' ministry it is said already to have "arrived" (11:20). Moreover—and this is the key difference from Thomas—in Luke there is still a firm expectation that there is a decisive event to occur at the end of the age (21:7–32; see esp. v. 31). The experiences of the kingdom as present in the life and ministry of Jesus are therefore proleptic of the denouement that can still be expected. This is evident in the immediate context of 17:20–21 as well, where Jesus goes on to discuss the coming of the son of man (17:22–37).

That is not the case, however, for the Gospel of Thomas. Here the kingdom is already fully present, inside all those who know themselves, recognizing that they are "the sons of the living father."[81] This polemic is not only directed against chiliasts of the author's own day (early second century), proto-orthodox authors such as Papias, who still expected a future, physical, utopian kingdom to appear on earth. It is even more directed against the sacred texts that such proto-orthodox were beginning to cherish as authoritative, such as the Gospel of Mark (9:1; 13:30) and the letters of Paul (1 Thess. 4:14–17; 1 Corinthians 15, especially vv. 24–25, 51–57), which envisioned the kingdom as coming not only with the transformation of the creation (Rom. 8:18–25) but also with the resurrection of the body, which would be raised immortal. Thomas demurs. The kingdom will not be experienced as a place to be entered by a future, physically transformed body; it is to be experienced now, as an internal reality, enjoyed by those who know who they really are.

Saying 18

The polemic continues along a similar line in saying 18. Now, however, rather than being the unnamed "Christian leaders" who misunderstand Jesus' eschatological teaching, it is the earthly disciples, who, foolishly, for this Gospel, ask about "how our end will be." The saying clearly calls to mind the Synoptic

tradition, where the disciples ask Jesus about the “end of the age” (Mark 13:3–4; Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:7), and where Jesus responds by delivering his apocalyptic discourse. One key difference is that in saying 18 the disciples ask their question in terms not of apocalyptic but of personal eschatology. They are interested in knowing their own fate, presumably after death. Such concerns are more in line with those of proto-orthodox texts like the Greek Apocalypse of Peter, also modeled on the Synoptic little apocalypse, but transformed from a description of the “end of the age” to an account of “life after death”—the fate of souls in the realms of the blessed and damned.

It is striking that in the Gospel of Thomas Jesus’ response redirects the question, away from the issue of personal destiny and the temporality that it implies (the postmortem experience of the believer). To know the “end” one has to know the “beginning.” The end, in fact, is not a new beginning, as the disciples mistakenly think. It is a return to the original beginning, which encapsulates the end. Those who recognize the beginning are already at the end; they have achieved the goal. That is to say, the end is not a cataclysmic break in history, as in apocalyptic eschatology, or the future fate of the soul, as in proto-orthodox transformations of that idea. It is instead a return to the beginning.

It is important to note that “the beginning” for this author is present. It “is.” The one who understands this beginning—who knows the primordial condition—is still in the present, and yet experiences the return to Eden. Such a one “will not taste death.” Since this final clause recalls saying 1, it should be clear that those who understand the secret sayings of Jesus are those who understand that the beginning is the end and so have achieved the Edenic existence of the kingdom. As saying 49 later expresses the matter: “You will find the kingdom; for you are from it and to it you will return.”[82] DeConick has provided a clear exposition of saying 18: “It is implied by this dialogue that the community previously has misunderstood the End to refer to the eschatological renewal of creation through cosmic endings, rather than the mystical renewal of creation and the original Adam through encratic practice and personal transformation.”[83]

It is true that even later proto-orthodox thinkers could stress the return to the beginning at the end, as seen, for example, in the comments of Origen:

> Seeing, then, that such is the end, when “all enemies shall have been subjected to Christ,” when “the last enemy shall be destroyed, that is death,” and when “the kingdom shall be delivered up to God and the Father by Christ to whom all things have been subjected,” let us, I say, from such an end as this, contemplate the beginning of things. For the

> end is always like the beginning; as therefore there is one end of all things, so we must understand that there is one beginning of all things, and as there is one end of many things, so from one beginning arise many differences and varieties, which in their turn are restored … to one end, which is like the beginning." (*On First Principles*, 1.6.2)[84]

But even here "the end" is an apocalyptic event, not a present reality. The polemic of the saying in Thomas is especially stark in comparison with the apocalyptic sayings of Jesus found in the Synoptic tradition. In Mark 9:1, in particular, the disciples "will not taste death" until they see that the apocalyptic events of cosmic upheaval transform their world. How different that is from the disciples of Thomas, who "will not taste death"—period. For the kingdom is not a future physical event to come to earth. It is within those who come to understand the secret teachings of Jesus and, thereby, come to know themselves.

Saying 37

Jesus' anti-apocalyptic eschatology, and the disciples' failure to appreciate it, are continued in saying 37. Once again the disciples ask a future-oriented question, in this instance involving not their own fate so much as the return of Jesus: "When will you appear to us and when shall we see you?" And once again Jesus corrects the question by his response: the full revelation of divine truth does not come from something that Jesus will do, such as return in glory. It comes from something his disciples do: escape the material trappings of this world ("when you strip naked without being ashamed and take off your clothes … and stamp on them"). For this Gospel, Jesus is not one who "will be" seen; he is already here, in this world, for those who already see: "Split a piece of wood: I am there. Lift up the stone and you will find me there" (saying 77). The disciples will "see" Jesus ("the son of the Living One")[85] when they escape the material trappings of this world.

Valantasis argues that the "clothes" of this passage represent social encumbrances,[86] but they are better understood as the materiality of the body, as more widely interpreted. And even though the metaphor of "stripping" may call to mind baptismal language, as stressed by J. Z. Smith, others such as April DeConick and Jarl Fossum have noted that a range of Jewish and Christian texts use the image to refer to the removal of the body ("stripped").[87] Trampling on the body, then, refers to physical renunciation, for example in the kinds of ascetic lifestyle otherwise endorsed by the Gospel. Moreover, behaving like

“little children” by stripping without shame may recall saying 18 and the need to return to “the beginning,” that is, to human existence before the Fall. Returning to a prelapsarian state means enjoying the life of Eden; it is worth noting that Adam and Eve are described in Gen. 2:25 as naked and not ashamed. Only after eating the fruit do they cover themselves (3:7, because they were “afraid”). In other Christian texts, such as the *Liber Graduum* (341:2–5), Adam and Eve are described, prior to eating the fruit, as naked nursing babies who are not ashamed.[88]

In short, for saying 37, the disciples err in eagerly awaiting the physical return of Jesus. What matters is not an imminent parousia but a new way of life. Jesus’ followers must escape their bodily constraints and the material trappings of this world in order to “see” Jesus as he really is, and thus return to an Edenic existence. The material world will not be destroyed by a decisive act of God in a future cataclysmic event; the world is to be escaped through renunciation of the body.

Saying 51

The disciples continue to demonstrate their lack of understanding in the opening question of saying 51: “When will the repose of the dead take place? And when will the new world come?” As Valantasis has pointed out, the question not only works against the tenor of the entire document—presupposing precisely the apocalyptic view that the author is at pains to polemicize against—it also fails to grasp the teaching of the immediately preceding saying 50, where “repose” is not for the dead but for the living. Once again Jesus corrects their misunderstanding: the “new world” is not a future event; it is already present for those who understand the teachings of Jesus and have achieved self-knowledge. The Kingdom is within those who know themselves.

Here, as in the preceding sayings, it is clear that we are witnessing developments within the Thomasine community as it shifts from an apocalyptic view inherited from other, earlier Christian traditions, and begins, then, to polemicize against them, stressing that the Kingdom is available in the here and now. DeConick has plausibly argued that the shift in the community’s thinking occurred in stages, evident in the probable (though hypothetical) transmission history of this particular saying. Originally, in her view, the disciples asked “when will the resurrection [ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ] of the dead occur?” This, then, was an apocalyptic view, that came to be displaced. But in a second stage the community’s eschatology became personal, rather than apocalyptic, and as a

result the question itself was changed: “When will the repose [ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΙΣ—different in only three letters] of the dead occur?” Jesus’ reply makes even better sense now: repose is present among those who know themselves (unlike the uncomprehending disciples) and so have recreated Eden in a prelapsarian state.[89]

It is worth recalling in this connection that there are clear indications elsewhere that the question of when the resurrection will occur was hotly debated. Colossians and Ephesians both suggest that the resurrection of believers has, in some spiritual sense, already happened, a view evidenced as well, earlier, by Paul’s opponents in Corinth. This is a view directly opposed by 2 Timothy (2:18). But it is adopted in modified form in the teachings of Paul’s false followers, Demas and Hermogenes, in the Acts of Paul (“the resurrection which [Paul] says is to come … has already taken place in the children, and that we rise again, after having come to the knowledge of the true God,” ch. 14), and in yet another form in the Gospel of Philip: “People who say they will first die and then arise are wrong. If they do not receive the resurrection first, while they are alive, they will receive nothing when they die” (Gospel of Philip 73).[90] This final perspective compares favorably with the view staked out in the Gospel of Thomas. The “repose” and the “new world” are not to be expected in the future: they have already come, “but for your part, you do not know it.”

Saying 113

The disciples’ eschatological misunderstanding comes to final expression in the climactic question of saying 113: “When will the kingdom come?” As already mentioned, the saying provides a closing bracket for the opening of saying 3, so that the Gospel begins and ends with the question of the kingdom, emphasizing in both places that it will not arrive in some undisclosed time in the future: “It will not come by waiting for it.” Nor will it be a physical entity here on earth: “They will not say, ‘Look, here it is,’ or ‘Look, it is there.’” Instead the kingdom is here and now, even though it is hidden from those who lack knowledge. For this Gospel, “knowledge” involves both an understanding of these secret teachings of Jesus and the self-knowledge that this understanding brings. And so, “the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and people do not see it.”

The polemic against the apocalyptic view here is extended through the use of familiar apocalyptic images. And so, for example, in the apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13:21–23 and Matt. 24:23–26 there are also false teachers who proclaim “Look, here is the Christ!” or “Look, there he is!” In this earlier conception the

true followers are not to believe these false proclamations, for the end will not come with the physical appearance of Jesus as a human here on earth. It will come with cataclysmic signs in the heavens, when the sun grows dark, the moon fails to give its light, and the stars fall from the sky. That is when the "Son of Man" will come on the clouds of heaven and send out his angels to collect his chosen ones.

For the Gospel of Thomas nothing could be farther from the truth. Here, false teachers are not false simply because they wrongly think Jesus will physically return to earth before the catastrophic end; they are false because they think there will be a catastrophic end. They are not wrong in advancing a faulty apocalyptic scenario; they are wrong in advancing any kind of apocalyptic scenario. The kingdom is not coming as a future event. For this Gospel it is experienced here and now among those who interpret and implement Jesus' sayings correctly and so know who they really are. The kingdom is already spread out on the earth. It is not coming at a future time to a specific place. It is available to all who "find the meaning of these words." The kingdom of God is not imminent; it is immanent.

1. See, e.g., Michael Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy*, JSNTSup (Sheffield : University of Sheffield Press, 1989).

2. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

3. Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1807.

4. Jens Herzer, "Fiction oder Tauschung? Zur Diskussion über die Pseudepigraphie der Pastoralbriefe," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 489–536. For another recent brief history of scholarship, see Luke Timothy Johnson, "First Timothy 1, 1–20: The Shape of the Struggle," in *1 Timothy Reconsidered*, ed. Karl Paul Donfried (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), pp. 19–39.

5. 3.1 (Leipzig: Weidmannischen Buchhandlung, 1812).

6. *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1835).

7. Leipzig: Englemann, 1880.

8. Jeremy Duff, "P46 and the Pastorals: A Misleading Consensus," *NTS* 44 (1998) : 578–90, answered in Eldon J. Epp, "Issues in the Interrelation of New Testament Textual Criticism and Canon," in *The Canon Debate: On the Origins and Formation of the Bible;* eds. Lee M. McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), pp. 485–515; reprinted in E. Epp, *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism: Collected Essays 1962–2004*

(Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 596–639, here 613–19.

9. As intimated, for instance, by Luke Timothy Johnson, “First Timothy 1, 1–20,” p. 19.

). Ihre Einheitlichkeit und Geschlossenheit dokumentiert sich weiter im einzelnen bis in eine enge Verwandtschaft der Sprache (Stil, Wortschatz), des Inhalts und vorausgesetzt kirchengeschichtliche Situation hinein. Sie sprechen dasselbe gehobene Griechisch, leben in derselben theologischen Begriffswelt, bekämpfen dieselben Häresien, kennen im ganzen dieselbe Organisation und Verfaßtheit der Einzelkirchen.” *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 4th ed. (Regensberg: Pustet, 1969), p. 12.

. “Die Past sind nicht bloß als pseudepigraphe Paulus*brife* geschaffen, sondern als pseudepigraphes *Corpus pastorale* konzipiert.” Peter Trummer, “Corpus Paulinum—Corpus Pastorale: Zur Ortung der Paulustradition in den Pastoralbriefen,” in *Paulus in den neutestamentlichen Spätschriften: zur Paulusrezeption im Neuen Testament*, ed. Karl Kertelge (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), p. 123.

:. Gerd Häfner, “Das Corpus Pastorale als literarisches Konstrukt,” T?iQ 187 (2007): 259: “If the letters are best read as a corpus, [that is to say] as a literary construct, this fact would speak against their composition by Paul.” (“Sind die Briefe am besten als Corpus zu lesen, als literarisches Konstrukt, spräche dies gegen ihre Abfassung durch Paulus.”)

;. Prior, *Paul the Letter Writer;* Murphy-O-Connor, “Paul the Letter Writer”; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy;* William A. Richards, *Difference and Distance in Post-Pauline Christianity: An Epistolary Analysis of the Pastorals* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); Rüdiger Fuchs, *Unerwartete Unterschiede: Müssen wir unsere Ansichten über “die” Pastoralbriefe revidieren?* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 2003); James W. Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008); Jens Herzer, “Fiktion oder Täuschung?”

l. Schleiermacher maintained that 1 Timothy was the odd one out, and that view has been maintained on rare occasion over the years. See the most recent discussion of Jens Herzer, “Rearranging the ‘House’ of God: A New Perspective on the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Empsychoi Logoi—Religious Innovations in Antiquity: Studies in Honour of Pieter Willem van der Horst*, ed. Alberdina Houtman *et al.* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 547–66. The striking similarities of 1 Timothy and Titus make this view implausible to most others.

;. In 1 Timothy it refers to the parousia, in 2 Timothy to the incarnation (or the resurrection?).

6. See further note 17.

7. That is to say, if one were to posit that a Pauline imitator wrote 2 Timothy and an imitator of both Paul and 2 Timothy wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, then the hypothesis would require that the latter imitator chose as the specific linguistic features to replicate largely those not found otherwise in Paul. Moreover, this hypothesis requires three authors and three stages, whereas all of the data are more simply explained on the basis of two authors working at two stages: Paul and an imitator. As is true with the Synoptic Problem, the best solution should not unnecessarily multiply authors and stages for data that can be explained more economically.

8. So, for example, Jens Herzer, “Rearranging the ‘House’ of God.”

9. Herzer, “Rearranging.”

0. *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, pp. 63–65.

1. *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*. NIBCNT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), p. 6.

2. *Making of Paul*, p. 84. Pervo goes on to show that if one assumes that the three make up a corpus, they can be read as a kind of epistolary novel.

3. L. T. Johnson, “1 Tim. 1:1-20,” p.22.

4. *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, p. 61.

5. P. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921).

6. Wilhelm Michaelis, “Pastoralbriefe und Wortstatistik,” *ZNW 28* (1929) : 69–76.

7. See, for example, Wolfgang Schenk, “Die Briefe an Timotheus I und II und an Titus (Pastoralbriefe) in der neueren Forschung (1945–1985),” *ANRW II*. 25, 4 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), pp. 3404–38.

8. Armin D. Baum, “Semantic Variation within the *Corpus Paulinum:* Linguistic Considerations Concerning the Richer Vocabulary of the Pastoral Epistles,” *TynBul* 59 (2008): 271–92.

9. Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus* AB (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1990), p. 5.

0. *1 and 2 Timothy*, p. 75: “one of the weakest arguments against authenticity.”

1. On the question of whether the verisimilitudes suggest authenticity, see the trenchant article of Brox, mentioned on p. 122.

2. I do not need to deal at any great length with scholars who continue to find the issue of forgery in the New Testament to be theologically or personally troubling, given all that I have shown so far. A commentator such as I. Howard Marshall admits that the evidence is too strong against Pauline authorship, but

he wants to insist that the Pauline follower who produced the letters did so “honestly”—not like the heretics who forged writings to promote their own “false” teachings (see p. 32, n. 9). This again is theology, not history. Such views lead then to his proposal, advanced with all seriousness, that in cases such as the Pastorals we speak not of pseudonymous but of allonymous writings, not of pseudepigraphy (let alone forgery) but allopigraphy.

3. David Cook, “The Pastoral Fragments Reconsidered,” *JTS* 35 (1984): 120–31. The even more highly nuanced, hypothetical, and, one might say, overly fragmented theory of James D. Miller, *The Pastoral Epistles as Composite Documents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) has also failed to persuade, for similar reasons.

4. As Lewis Donelson points out, this is simply not a problem for anyone who has read extensively in the forgeries of antiquity. He refers in particular, as an example, to the famous twelfth letter of “Plato,” forged in order to validate yet other works of Plato that the author himself knows are forged (he may have forged them himself), including random irrelevancies to mask his motives by what appear to be off-the-cuff remarks. *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*, pp. 23–42.

5. Fingierte Personalnotizen sind als Stilmittel antiker Pseudepigraphie bekannt und stellen auch in den Pastoralbriefen nichts Erstaunliches dar; “Zu den persönlichen Notizen der Pastoralbriefe,” *BZ* 13 (1969): 76–94, here 79–79; reprinted in Brox, ed., *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdischchristlichen Antike*, pp. 275–76. Brox goes on to show that the verisimilitudes are not merely guises for authenticity, but they serve the rhetorical purposes—especially paranetic—of the letters as well.

6. “1 Timothy 1, 1–20,” pp. 24–25.

7. Prior, *Paul the Letter Writer*, p. 39.

8. Ibid., p. 45.

9. Prior does explore the use of the first person singular and plural in Paul’s letters, but when one examines the data he provides, it is to no effect. That Paul himself wrote these so-called coauthored letters by himself is suggested by Galatians 1:1, “all the brothers who are with me.” Are we seriously to imagine that everyone pitched in?

0. Luke Timothy Johnson, “II Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Reexamination,” *JRelS 6* (1978): 1–26.

1. *Pseudepigraphy*, p. 117.

2. Ceslas Spicq, *Saint. Paul: les épitres pastorales* (Paris: Gabalda, 1969), pp. 52–72.

3. Robert J. Karris, “The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles,” *JBL* 92 (1973): 549–63; Günter Haufe, “Gnostische Irrlehre und ihre Abwehr in den Pastoralbriefen,” in *Gnosis und Neues Testament: Studien aus Religionswissenschaft und Theologie*, ed. Karl-Wolfgang Tröger (Güterslow: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1973), pp. 325–39; Josef Zmijewski, “Die Pastoralbriefe als pseudepigraphische Schriften—Beschreibung, Erklärung, Bewertung,” *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* (1979): 97–118; I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles;* Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument*.

4. “2 Timothy Contrasted with 1 Timothy and Titus,” *RB* 98 (1991): 414.

5. Jerry L. Sumney, *“Servants of Satan,” “False Brothers” and Other Opponents of Paul*, JSNTSup. 188 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

6. Robert J. Karris, “The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles,” *JBL* 92 (1973): 549–63.

7. See p. 176.

8. See further pp. 176–77 and 185–86.

9. “One might therefore even consider whether the author here perhaps polemicizes directly against Col (as well as Eph).” (“Man könnte deshalb sogar erwägen, ob der Vf hier möglicherweise direkt gegen Kol (und auch Eph) polemisiert.”) *Aufhebung*, p. 139.

0. *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT 2.42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991). His more recent discussion, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition, and Collection* (Downer’s Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2004), adds little to the discussion; nor does the work of Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995).

1. Richards (*Secretary*, p. 46) cites Cicero, *Fam*. 16.10.2 and *Att*. 5.20, but he may be overreading the texts.

2. *Att*. 7.17, cited in Richards, *Secretary*, p. 96, note (in quo accusavi mecum ipse Pompeium).

3. Ibid., p. 52, n. 155. It should be noted that Richards uses this quotation in order to support his thesis that Brutus actually had a secretary compose his correspondence for him, but the text is explicitly addressing the issue of “epistolary style,” not substance.

4. The term *peasant* has become a site of debate and even confusion in New Testament scholarship; I am using it in its most basic sense to refer to an uneducated person of low social status.

5. See Richards, *Secretary*, p. 213, depending on Wikenhauser’s *Einleitung*.

6. Richards, *Secretary*, p. 48.

7. “Paul and Letter Writing in the First Century,” *CBQ* 28 (1966):470.

8. Richards, *Secretary*, p. 48.

9. *Att* 11.2,.4; 11.5. Cited by Richards, *Secretary*, p. 50, nn. 147, 148.

0. Cicero, *Fam*, 8.1.1; cited in Richards, *Secretary*, p. 51.

1. As Richards later admits, *Secretary*, p. 111.

2. Ibid., pp. 110–11, emphasis his.

3. *Vir. ill*. 1. Richard Bauckham is not right when he claims that Jerome argued that the differences between the two letters were due to the use of two different secretaries *(Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC 50, Waco: Word Books, 1983, p. 145). The passage in question is *Ad Hebidiam*, Epistula 120, 11 (c. 406/7): “Further, the two epistles, which circulate as Peter’s, are also different in style among themselves and in character, and in word structure; from which we understand that he used different interpreters (or “translators”: interpretibus—not secretaries) as necessary.”

4. “Non est igitur ignorandum praesentem epistolam esse falsatam, quae licet publicetur, non tamen in canone est.” *Enarr. In Epist*. Cathol. *PG* 39, 1774.

5. Thus, for example, Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

6. Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), p. 137.

7. Ibid., p. 136.

8. See note 54.

9. “Peter, Second Epistle of,” ABD, 5. 284.

0. Ibid., p. 283.

1. Ibid., p. 284.

2. “This makes for a particularly daring argument if one keeps in mind that the author himself fictionally constructs the claim to eye-witness status” (“Darinliegt freilich ein besonders kühnes Argument, wenn man bedenkt, dass der Autor selbst den Anspruch der Augenzeugenschaft fiktional konstruiert”). Jörg Frey, “Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild im Judasbrief und im Zweiten Petrusbrief,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 707.

3. See, for example, Frederik Wisse, “The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology,” in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig*, ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 133–43.

4. *Paulus im ältesten Christentum: Das Bild des Apostels und die Rezeption der*

paulinischen Theologie in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Marcion (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979), pp. 93–94.

5. Demas and Hermogenes teach that “the resurrection which [Paul] says is to come … has already taken place in the children, and that we rise again, after having come to the knowledge of the true God.” *Acts of Paul* 14; translation ofJ. K. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

6. Bauckham claims that since “Testaments” were by their nature fictional in character, it is “very implausible to suppose that most Jewish readers were so naïve as to read such speeches as accurate historical reports or that their authors were so naïve as to expect them to be so read.” This, again, is history by assertion. What, exactly, makes either naïvety implausible? He goes on to claim that 2 Peter, itself a Testament, was meant as an “entirely transparent fiction” (*2 Peter and Jude*, p. 134), offering in support the point that the false teachers are spoken of in the present tense, rather than the conventional future tense—a sign to the readers of the book’s fictional status. In response, it is hard to see how he can have it both ways (Testaments were read as fictions; this book differs from Testaments in a way to make readers take it as a fiction), making him appear to be grasping at straws. Moreover, if the author did not mean for his readers to take his identity seriously, it is difficult indeed to see why he roots his authority in a personal experience of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, a real experience in contrast to the fantasies of the false teachers. Far more convincing is the counterposition of J. Frey, “Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild.”

7. We are fortunate to have a Greek fragment, POxyr 654, that is to be given primacy. There is, unfortunately, an important lacuna at 1.15, normally filled with 0eou, for “kingdom of God,” but which DeConick argues should be filled with oupavou, for “kingdom of heaven.” If she is wrong, then the saying is even more closely tied to Luke 17:21. But she makes a good case: the lacuna has room for fourteen to seventeen letters; the standard reconstruction provides only twelve, whereas hers provides fifteen. April DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas in Translation* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 51.

8. The Coptic reads “those who draw you” (NETSOK). DeConick argues for a semitic original from NGD, meaning either to draw or to lead; the Greek, then, mistranslated the text, leading to the Coptic. *Original Gospel*, p. 52.

9. “The Gospel of Thomas, Saying, 3, and Deuteronomy XXX.11–14,” *ExpTim* 78 (1976–77): 151–52.

0. Translations taken from Ehrman and Plese, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 303–35. Here, however, I have accepted DeConick’s reconstruction of the text; see note 77 above.

1. Uwe-Karsten Plisch is wrong to say that lines 1–3 and 4–5 are unrelated. Knowing oneself means to recognize the fact that the kingdom is within; failing to know oneself is to lack the kingdom. *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary*, tr. Gesine Schenke Robinson (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008), pp. 43–44.

2. It may be worth noting that although the polemic is directed in part against an apocalyptic notion—even if modified in the direction of personal eschatology—the notion that Endzeit gleicht Urzeit—is central to Jewish apocalyptic thought, as recognized as early as Hermann Gunkel (*Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen. 1 und Ap. Joh. 12;* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1895).

3. *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 102.

4. Trans. G. W. Butterworth, *Origen on First Principles* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973).

5. Richard Valantasis makes the interesting argument that by stripping off their clothes and trampling on them the disciples will see (i.e., come to know) not Jesus, but others of Jesus' followers. His reasoning is that since Jesus is described as "the living one" ("the living Jesus" of the prologue) then he could not also be the "son of the living one." His son must, then, be one like him: his followers. *The Gospel of Thomas* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 113. It is probably better, though, to see the Son of the Living One as "the Son of God," since, after all, the Father too is described as a "living one," as in Saying 3 ("sons of the living father").

6. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 113.

7. Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Garments of Shame," *HR* 5 (1966): 217–38; April DeConick and Jarl Fossum, "Stripped Before God: A New Interpretation of Logion 37 in the Gospel of Thomas," *VC* 45 (1991): 123–50.

8. See DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas*, 116.

9. Ibid., p. 183. Plisch argues that the text as we have it originally read ANASTASIS—resurrection—but was accidentally altered through scribal error. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 132.

10. Translation of Marvin Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).

CHAPTER NINE

Forgeries in Support of Paul and His Authority

Most of the literary forgeries we have considered to this stage have involved the teachings of Paul. There were, of course, other Christian teachers, already in the first century, who claimed to represent the "true" understanding of the emerging Christian tradition more adequately than Paul. It may not be surprising, then, to find that a number of literary forgeries arose in the period, alternatively championing or challenging Paul's authority. In this chapter we will consider forgeries produced in support of the "Apostle to the Gentiles"; in the chapter that follows we will look at forgeries that call his authority, and his message, into question.

Two of the forgeries that we will be considering in this chapter are controversial among investigators today, one because many scholars question whether it has anything to do with Paul, his message, and his authority (1 Peter), the other because, in the judgment of most scholars, it makes no obvious authorial claim and so cannot be thought of as forged (the Acts of the Apostles). I will advance reasons for thinking that both scholarly opinions are wrong: these books are very much concerned with salvaging the image and authority of Paul, and both are best understood as forgeries.

FIRST PETER

Scholarship on 1 Peter has advanced dramatically since 1976, when J. H. Elliott declared it the "exegetical step-child" of the New Testament.[1] By 2004 Eugene Boring could note that during the preceding quarter-century more than sixty commentaries on the epistle had appeared in English and the major languages of Europe.[2] One of the hotly debated issues in the period involved the question of authorship, an issue that goes far back in the history of its modern investigation. Already in 1788 Semler, who did not deny the letter to Peter, indicated that the letter closely paralleled the teachings of Paul and could be seen as a Pauline "imitation."[3] It was another twenty years before the Petrine authorship of the book was first challenged by H. H. Cludius, who maintained that the attribution of the letter to Peter was the result of a textual corruption in 1:1, where an original ὁ πρεσβύτερος was altered to read Πέτρος ἀπόστολος.[4] As we will see, since Cludius's day others too have proposed different textual changes of 1:1 to

explain that the attribution is mistaken.

Arguments for 1 Peter as a Forgery

It is widely held today that the book was not written by Simon Peter. Boring claims that this is the general opinion among critical scholars, outside the ranks of those who disallow forgery in the New Testament on general principle.[5] A number of arguments are typically advanced for pseudepigraphy, some of them stronger than others. Among the more subsidiary are the following. First, there is almost nothing to suggest that Christianity had spread in Peter's day throughout the provinces of Asia Minor named in 1:1, making it highly unlikely that he, the historical Peter, would have written to churches there; moreover other traditions notably do not associate Peter with Christians in the general region. Next, if Peter himself had written the letter, it is very hard indeed to explain that in his references to "Christ" he gives no indication that he was his companion throughout his ministry; in fact, he gives no indication whatsoever that he had any personal knowledge of Jesus or his teachings (not even in 5:1, as we will see). Moreover, rather than identifying himself as a companion of Jesus, the author indicates that he is a "presbyter" (5:1), an office otherwise not associated with Peter, who appears rather to have been a missionary-apostle. Relatedly, the book shows that at the time of its composition "presbyters" were running the church as episkopoi (5:1–5; ἐπισκοποῦντες,, v. 2). There is no evidence of this kind of structured leadership of the churches during the lifetime of Peter, although obviously it became the model of Pauline churches by the time of the Pastorals, some decades after Peter's death. Furthermore, the author uses the term *Christian* (4:16) as if it were in established usage, even though it is otherwise not attested, for example in the writings of Paul, until closer to the end of the first century, in the book of Acts.

This final point relates to a much stronger argument against Petrine authorship. By the time this letter was written, it had become commonplace for followers of Jesus to suffer persecution "as a Christian," simply "for the name" (4:12–17). There is nothing to suggest that the mere name "Christian" was ground for persecution in apostolic times. Even in the later accounts of the book of Acts, there is no instance in which followers of Jesus suffered persecution "for the name." On the contrary, Christians are punished for what is recognized, correctly or incorrectly, as wrongdoing. The same can be said about the earliest instance we have of imperial opposition to the Christians under Nero, the persecution that, traditionally, is thought to have led to Peter's own martyrdom.

As Tacitus makes abundantly clear, Nero rounded up the Christians of Rome and subjected them to brutal treatment and execution not because they were Christians per se, but because of arson (a false charge, according to Tacitus; *Annals* 15.44). It is not until we get to the famous correspondence of Pliny with Trajan around 112 CE that we find any instance of Christians persecuted simply for bearing the name Christian (Book 10). By Pliny's time it was known that calling oneself "Christian" meant something. Specifically it meant refusing to reverence and sacrifice to the gods of the state. That is why Pliny employed a simple device to decide whether persons who denied being Christian were telling the truth: all they had to do was repeat prayers he provided and offer incense to the image of the emperor. Those who refused to do so hung on to the name Christian; those who complied forsook the name. This does not mean that we can facilely locate 1 Peter to the time of Pliny. It simply means that the recognition that the name Christian was ground for persecution cannot be located anywhere near the lifetime of Peter himself. When the recognition arose afterward is uncertain, but it probably happened sometime between Nero and Trajan, and the book is accordingly best located to that period.

Supporting evidence comes in the argument advanced most convincingly by C. Hunzinger, that the veiled reference to Rome in the epithet "Babylon," named as the place from which the author writes (5:13), makes sense only after 70 CE, years after Peter's death.[6] That "Babylon" must refer to Rome is shown by the facts that (1) elsewhere in both Jewish and Christian texts (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) "Babylon" is a codeword for Rome, and (2) Peter is never associated in any of our traditions with either Mesopotamia or Egypt (where there was another Babylon), whereas he is frequently connected with Rome, indeed as its first bishop.

Other nicknames for Rome exist, however (Kittim, Edom). Why has the author chosen "Babylon"? As Hunzinger notes, the reasons for the identification become clear in light of Jewish apocalyptic texts. Passages such as 4 Ezra 3.1–2, 28, 31, and Syr. Baruch 11.1 probably show that Rome was thought of as (the new) Babylon because it too destroyed Jerusalem and, especially, the Temple. In other words, it is the catastrophe of 70 CE, in comparison with 586 BCE, that makes the identification both obvious and palpable. So too we find in the Sybilline oracles that Nero flees "from Babylon" (5.143), and later in the same oracle we find Babylon directly connected to the land of Italy, again because of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.[7] And so Hunzinger's conclusion: "The unanimity of the Jewish supporting data forces the conclusion that *the designation of Rome as Babylon came about under the impression of the*

renewed destruction of the Jerusalem temple."[8] 1 Peter, therefore, could not have been written prior to 70 CE and, as a result, could not have been written by Peter, who apparently died years earlier.[9]

There is an even more compelling reason for thinking that Peter did not write this letter. In all likelihood, Peter could not write.

Peter as Illiterate

In his now-classic study of ancient literacy, William Harris gave compelling reasons for thinking that at the best of times in antiquity only 10 percent or so of the population was able to read.[10] By far the highest portion of readers was located in urban settings. Widespread literacy like that enjoyed throughout modern societies requires certain cultural and historical forces to enact policies of near universal, or at least extensive, education of the masses. Prior to the industrial revolution, such a thing was neither imagined nor desired. As Meir Bar Ilan notes: "Literacy does not emerge in a vacuum but rather from social and historical circumstances."[11]

Moreover, far fewer people in antiquity could compose a writing than could read, as shown by the investigations of Raffaella Cribiore, who stresses that reading and composition were taught as two distinct skills and at different points of the ancient curriculum. Learning even the basics of reading was a slow and arduous process, typically taking some three years and involving repeating "endless drills" over "long hours": "In sum, a student became accustomed to an incessant gymnastics of the mind."[12] These kinds of "gymnastics" obviously required extensive leisure and money, neither of which could be afforded by any but the wealthy classes. Most students did not progress beyond learning the basics of reading, to the second level of grammar. Training in composition came only after these early stages, and most students did not get to that point:[13] "the ability to articulate one's thoughts in writing was achieved only when much literature had been digested."[14] Especially difficult, and requiring additional training, was acquiring literacy in a second language. Indeed, as, Cribiore points out, "bilingualism did not correspond to biliteracy."[15]

All of these points bear closely on the question of whether an Aramaic-speaking fisherman from rural Galilee could produce a refined Greek composition such as 1 Peter. But before pressing that question, we should consider the issue of literacy specifically in Roman Palestine, a matter pursued most convincingly in studies by Bar-Ilan and Catherine Hezser.[16]

Bar-Ilan begins his analysis by referring to cross-cultural studies that have demonstrated that literacy rates are closely tied to broader social and cultural factors. Urban societies are always more literate than rural. Moreover, low birth rates, low population growth, and low life expectancy all relate to low literacy rates, and for good reason. With respect to life expectancy, for example: the use of the written word positively affects a society's hygiene, infant care, agricultural practices, and so on, all of which play a vital role in longevity. And so, for example, the more illiterate societies always suffer the highest rates of infant mortality.

Turning to hard historical evidence for ancient Israel, Bar-Ilan notes that the Talmud allows for towns where only one person could read in the synagogue (*Soferim* 11:2). Since all synagogues that have been discovered can accommodate more than fifty people, we are probably looking at literacy rates, in these places, at about 1 percent. When this figure is tied to the fact that the land of Israel was 70 percent rural, and only 10 percent was "highly" urban, one can take into account all the sundry factors and crunch the numbers: "it is no exaggeration to say that the total literacy rate in the Land of Israel … was probably less than 3%." Most of this 3 percent would have been wealthy Jews living in the major cities.

Hezser has devoted the only full-length study to this question in her monograph *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*.[17] She agrees with Bar-Ilan on his statistical claims: total literacy in Palestine was probably around 3 percent; those who were literate were largely located in urban areas; some villages and towns had a literacy rate of lower than 1 percent. In this connection Hezser makes the striking historical observation that "the only literary works which can with certainty be attributed to Palestinian Jews of the first century C.E. are the writings of Josephus and the no longer extant works of his opponent Justus of Tiberias" (both of whom "received a Greek education and were influenced by Graeco-Roman writing").[18] Moreover, Hezser argues that "writing seems to have mostly—and perhaps almost exclusively—been used by the political, economic, and religious-intellectual elites in late Roman Palestine." Was the fisherman Simon-Peter in this august group?

Before pursuing that question, we should look at the related issue of the use of Greek in first-century Palestine. Hezser evaluates the extent to which Palestinian Jews may have been able to converse in Greek more generously than other more recent studies devoted to the question, as we will see in a moment. But even she points out that Josephus is the only Jew of Roman Palestine to indicate that he learned Greek, and she notes that Josephus himself indicates that

he could not write literary Greek without assistance from Greek speakers (*Contra Apionem* 1.9). Moreover, Hezser admits that we do not know whether Josephus studied Greek before coming to Rome.[19] She later acknowledges that most Jews in Palestine would have had only “a rudimentary knowledge of Greek,” which involved knowing “a few phrases to lead to a simple conversation.”[20] That is a long way from being able to write a high-level Greek composition, especially in light of the fact that simple conversational Greek took no special training, whereas learning to read (even in one’s own language) took years of hard work, and composition took years more. Louis Feldman notes that “Josephus’s admission (*Contra Apionem* 1.50 [= 1.9]) that he needed assistance in composing the version in Greek of the Jewish War illustrates that few attained the competence in the language necessary for reading and understanding Greek literature.”[21]

The most persuasive studies of the use of Greek in Galilee in particular have been produced by Mark Chancey, who shows that scholars who maintain that Greek was widely spoken in the first century have based their views on very slim evidence, in which Palestinian data from over a number of centuries have been generalized into claims about the use of Greek in Galilee in the first half of the first century.[22] There is, in fact, scant evidence that Greek was widely used outside of the major urban areas. People living in rural areas spoke almost exclusively Aramaic.

These and other studies have made it clear that there were few educated people in Palestine in the days of Peter. Those who did have the benefits of education would have been taught Hebrew to enable them to read the Torah, unless they came from a fabulously wealthy aristocratic family in a major city. These fortunate few would have made up the bulk of the 3 percent of Palestine who could read. Moreover, most of the 3 percent who could read could not compose a sentence or a paragraph. Most of those who could compose a paragraph could not compose an entire book. Most of those who could compose a book could not do so in a foreign language, Greek. Most of those who could do so, could not compose it in elegant Greek. Was Peter, a lower-class fisherman from rural Galilee, among that minuscule fraction of the Palestinian population who could compose books in elegant Greek? He was not wealthy. He would have had no time or resources for an education. Let alone an education in reading a foreign language. Let alone education in Greek composition. Acts 4:13 is probably right: Peter was illiterate.[23]

In pursuing this line of inquiry, we might ask what we can know about Peter as a person, prior to his becoming a disciple of Jesus. The answer is that we do

not know much at all. The Gospels are consistent only in portraying him as a fisherman from the village of Capernaum in rural Galilee. We can assume that since he was a common laborer, he was not from the landed aristocracy; and since he was from rural Galilee, he would have spoken Aramaic. What can we say about his home "town" of Capernaum?

The historical and social insignificance of the place can be seen by the fact that it is not mentioned in any source, including the Hebrew Bible, prior to the writings of the New Testament. In the Gospels it is portrayed as a fishing village on the "sea" of Galilee (Matt. 4:13; 8:5; 11:23; 17:24; Mark 1:21; 2:1; 9:33; Luke 4:23, 31; 7:1; 10:15; John 2:12; 4:46; 6:17, 24, 59). It is sometimes called a πόλις, although, as we will see, that designation is certainly wrong. Josephus mentions it only because he fell off his horse nearby and was taken there (*Life* 72); he calls it, more accurately, a "village" (κώμη). The rabbinic literature mentions it as a place of the minim (*Midr. Qoh*. 1.8.4; 7.26.3). There is no other literary evidence about the first-century town.

Most archaeologists associate it with Tel Hum, the ruins of which were discovered in 1838 by the American biblical archaeologist Edward Robbins, and identified as Capernaum in 1866 by the British engineer Charles Wilson. Based on the archaeological evidence, the best estimates place the population at around a thousand in the first century.[24] There is no suggestion from the material remains that it was a center of high intellectual activity. In fact, there is no evidence of intellectual life at all. As Jonathan Reed has pointed out, archaeologists have turned up no evidence of public buildings, such as shops or storage facilities. The local market must have been held in tents or booths in open unpaved public areas. The town was not built on any major international trade route; the Roman roads in the area are from the second century. There are no structures or materials associated with social elites (e.g., plaster surfaces, decorative frescoes, marble, mosaics, red ceramic roof tiles). The houses were constructed of rough stone basalt built without "the benefit of a skilled craftsman's techniques or tools," with insulation provided by mud or clay and smaller stones packed in the interstices, and thatched roofs.[25] There are no material remains of anything pagan; there are no inscriptions from the first century. Reed concludes that the population was "predominantly illiterate."

In short, Capernaum was a rather isolated and relatively unknown Jewish village in the backwaters of rural Galilee, with no evidence of any gentile presence. Its inhabitants were very poor. It was certainly not a polis, just an impoverished village.[26] If Bar-Ilan and Hezser are right that villages in rural Galilee could well have had literacy rates lower than 1 percent, maybe eight to

ten persons in town would have been able to read in Peter's day. Or is this too generous? In any event, the handful of literate persons would have been the wealthiest and best-connected persons in the village. Simon Peter, on the other hand, was simply one of the local fishermen. Those in town who could read would be able to read Hebrew and would have spoken Aramaic. Could any of these handful compose a sentence? It is possible—but an entire book? It seems unlikely. Could they have composed a book in Greek? Almost certainly not. In highly literate Greek? It completely strains credibility.

What can we say, on the other hand, about the author of 1 Peter? It is widely noted that the language of the book is that of an educated Greek-speaking author. J. H. Elliott notes that the polished Greek style "[reveals] numerous traces of literary refinement"[27] and "displays abundant affinities in vocabulary and style to classical writings, evidencing 'rhetorical competence' and 'literary refinement' of the author."[28] P. Achtemeier notes that, among other things, the author uses anaphora for parallel phrases; he employs antithetic as well as synthetic parallelism; he uses coordinate parallel expressions in which the first is negative, the second is positive, so as to stress a particular idea; in some places he produces a rhythmic structure and occasional long periods.[29] Twice the author uses εἰ with the optative, a refinement not found among most *koine* writers (3:14, 17). It seems scarcely possible that this is the writing of an Aramaic-speaking peasant from the hinterlands.

A related issue is the author's use of the Septuagint. Jews in rural Palestine familiar with Scripture would have heard it read in Hebrew. The vast majority of them would not have the opportunity or ability to study it on the page. The author of 1 Peter, on the other hand, is intimately familiar with the Jewish Scriptures. Apart from the quotation in 4:8, which is sometimes recognized as a direct translation of Proverbs 10:12 from the Hebrew,[30] the author invariably cites Scripture according to the Septuagint. This too is barely conceivable in a Galilean fisherman raised to speak Aramaic.

It is commonly argued that since Peter became a missionary to foreign lands after Jesus' death (Gal. 2:7; 1 Cor. 9:5), he must have picked up a knowledge of Greek in his travels. The reality, however, is that we simply have no way of knowing how Peter engaged in his missionary work. Did he use an interpreter? Did he learn enough Greek to communicate more easily? Even if he did so, that would scarcely qualify him to write a highly literary composition. Everyone in the Greek-speaking world could speak Greek. But only those with extensive training could learn to read. And only those who went past the first few years of training could learn how to compose a writing. Training in composition came

only after everything else was mastered at the end of one's time with a grammatikos: alphabet, syllables, writing one's name, copying, reading scriptio continua, studying the poets, and so forth. It took years, plus a good deal of native talent, to become proficient. When exactly would Peter have found the time and resources to go back to school? And what evidence is there from the ancient world that *anyone* received a primary and secondary education precisely as an adult? To my knowledge there is no evidence at all.

In combination with all the other evidence indicated at the outset, there is really only one viable conclusion. The book of 1 Peter was not written by Peter, but by someone falsely claiming to be Peter. It is, in short, a forgery.[31]

Attempts to Explain Away the Forgery

There have been numerous attempts to exonerate the author of 1 Peter of the charge that he wrote to mislead his reader into thinking he was Peter. As seen already, as far back as 1808 Cludius argued that 1:1 involved a textual corruption, where "the presbyter" was altered to read "the apostle Peter." A somewhat more interesting emendation was suggested by K. M. Fisher, who proposed that the book was originally written as a (Deutero-)Pauline epistle: rather than Πέτρος in 1:1 the author wrote Παῦλος..[32] This would make sense of the Pauline character of the letter otherwise, about which I will be speaking momentarily, although it would not get the author off the forger's hook, as in either case he would be claiming to be someone other than who he was.

Sometimes it is argued that Peter is the authority behind the letter, who commissioned someone else to write it for him. L. Goppelt and (many) others have suggested that it was written (ultimately) by Silvanus[33]; J. G. Eichhorn postulated that it was Mark[34]; Seufert put forward the author of Acts[35]; and Streeter, going yet further out on the precarious limb, proposed Ariston of Smyrna.[36] The one thing all of these guesses have in common is that they are based on virtually no evidence whatsoever. In addition, quite apart from the speculation involving specific names, we have already seen that there is nothing to suggest that it was an acceptable practice—or even a practice at all—for an "author" to have someone else write a work for him.[37] If he did commission such a work, this other person would be the author.

More commonly scholars have provided a toned-down version of the "commission" theory and suggested that the style, and possibly to some degree the substance, of the letter was provided by a secretary. More often than not, the secretary is named as Silvanus, in light of the conclusion of 5:12:

διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖντοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι’ ὀλίγων ἔγραψα. Brox notes several of the problems with this identification of the Greek stylist behind the letter. For one thing, transferring responsibility for the wording of the letter to Silvanus does not actually solve the problem of the Greek, since he too was an Aramaic-speaking Jew from Palestine (Acts 15:22). Moreover, if he did compose the letter, then, once again, it is he, rather than Peter, who was its real author. But even more, it is implausible to think that Silvanus wrote the letter, given his self-praise, then, in 5:12, and his reference, to himself, as having written the letter "through" himself. But even more important, as is now widely recognized, to write a letter διά someone is not to use that person as a secretary but as the letter carrier. 5:12 is not indicating that Silvanus composed the letter but that he took it to its destination.[38]

The ultimate problem with this view, however, is the one I dealt with at length in the preceding chapter. There is virtually nothing to support the so-called secretary hypothesis, which instead of ancient evidence rests on scholarly speculation. And one should always try to think through how, exactly, the hypothesis is supposed to have worked in a specific instance. In the case of 1 Peter, Peter himself could not have dictated this letter in Greek to a secretary any more than he could have written it in Greek. To do so would have required him to be perfectly fluent in Greek, to have mastered rhetorical techniques in Greek, and to have had an intimate familiarity with the Jewish Scriptures in Greek. None of that is plausible. Nor can one easily think that he dictated the letter in Aramaic and the secretary (Silvanus or anyone else) translated it into Greek. The letter does not read like a Greek translation of an Aramaic original, but as an original Greek composition with Greek rhetorical flourishes. Moreover the letter presupposes the knowledge of the Greek Old Testament, so the person who composed the letter (whether orally or in writing) must have known the Scriptures in Greek.

Given the lack of evidence for the use of secretaries in the ways needed for Peter to stand as the ultimate authority behind the letter, one is left having to make a choice. Which view is more probable, historically? A scenario that does not have any known analogy (Peter asking someone else to write the treatise in his name in a different language) or a scenario that has a very large number of analogies, since it happened all the time? Forgeries happened all the time. Surely that is the best explanation for the letter.

The Function of the Forgery

Apart from the name “Peter” at the outset of the letter and the reference to Rome (“Babylon”) at the end, there is nothing in the book of 1 Peter to tie it specifically to the Petrine tradition. This makes the book decidedly different from all the other canonical books we have looked at so far, the Deutero-Pauline epistles that are clearly in trajectories that could trace themselves back to Paul, and 2 Peter, which goes out of its way to claim Petrine origins. In the case of 1 Peter, the authorial name is attached simply to provide apostolic credentials. There is nothing about the book itself that would make anyone think that it is Peter’s in particular.

According to Galatians, Peter was the apostle-missionary to Jews (Gal. 2:8–9). But this book is not addressed to Jews, Peter’s concern, but to gentiles. Thus 1:14 speaks of the “passions of your former ignorance” (a phrase hard to ascribe to Jews, but standard polemic against pagans); 1:18 refers to the readers as ransomed from the “futile manner of conduct passed down by their ancestors” (difficult to ascribe to Jews from a writer who sees Scripture as given by God); and most decisively, the author applies to his readers the words of Hosea 1:6, 9: “formerly you were not the people but now you are the people of God” (2:10). The author is speaking to converted pagans.[39] This is not the apostle to the Jews. And so, when he speaks of their “dispersion” in 1:1 he is not referring to the Jewish diaspora; these are Christians who are living away from their “true home” in heaven, temporarily.[40]

Moreover, there is nothing distinctive to Peter’s views here, at least as these are known from the scant references to them in Paul, the only surviving author to mention Peter during his lifetime (e.g., Galatians 2). Nothing indicates that this author held to the ongoing importance and validity of the prescriptions of the Law: circumcision, kosher food regulations, Sabbath observance, Jewish festivals, for example. The significance of Scripture, for this author, is not that it provides guidelines for cultic activities in the community’s life together. The “word of the Lord” is the gospel of Christ, not the Jewish Scriptures (1:25); the prophets looked forward to Christ and are fulfilled in him and in his new people the Christians (1:12; 2:6, 10); Scripture is important chiefly for its high ethical demands (3:8–12).

There are self-conscious epistolary conventions in the reference to the addressees in 1:1 and the closing greetings of 5:12–13. But both passages make the reader think of Paul, not Peter. The missionary sphere is Asia Minor, where Paul established churches but which is never associated in other traditions with Peter. The two persons mentioned at the end, Silvanus and Mark, are best known as Pauline associates (Silvanus: 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Acts

15:22–18:5; Mark: Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11: Phlm. 24).[41] The injunction to “greet one another with a kiss” is almost straight from Paul (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26) and occurs nowhere else.

The only possible bit of verisimilitude that might make a reader think of Peter is in 5:1, where the author claims to have been a witness of Christ’s sufferings. As widely noted, however, this scarcely sounds like the Peter of the rest of the Christian tradition, at least as it has been handed down to us, who fled after Jesus’ arrest, denied his Lord three times, and was notably absent from the crucifixion.[42] It may be germane that the book of Acts stresses Peter as a witness to Jesus, his death, and resurrection (1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41). Here too there is no sense that Peter actually observed Jesus suffer, so that there is no reason to suspect that is what the author of 1 Peter 5:1 had in mind either. But even more important, Peter in these other passages is not said to be uniquely qualified as a witness. In every instance he is simply one of the apostolic band who bear testimony to Jesus and the salvation he has brought. There is nothing about 1 Peter 5:1, then, that would make a reader think of Peter in particular from among the faithful band that bore witness to Christ. And this band includes not just the twelve apostles in Acts: Stephen too is called a μάρτυς (22:20) as, notably, is Paul himself (22:15; 26:16).

In view of all these considerations, the older claim of A. Jülicher and E. Fascher remains valid: “One can absolutely insist that if the first word ‘Peter’ were missing from our ‘letter,’ nobody would have guessed it might have been authored by Peter.”[43] In fact, as already suggested above, everything in this letter instead sounds like Paul. This was recognized long ago by F. C. Baur and the “school” that he established. Far too often the view has been tarnished by the guilt of that association, as it was attached by Baur and his followers to his entire, complex, and now universally discounted theory of church history. But that attachment can itself be profitably abandoned without sacrificing all of the data that first brought it to mind. The Pauline character of 1 Peter stands out independently of the extravagant theories of the Tübingen school.[44]

It has nonetheless become virtually de rigueur to discount the Paulinisms of 1 Peter, as evidenced in such major commentaries as those of Goppelt, Achtemeier, and Elliott, and especially in such a full-length study as that of Jens Herzer.[45] Still, it should be pointed out that a book like Herzer’s *Petrus oder Paulus* was perceived to be necessary precisely because 1 Peter does bear so many resemblances to a (deutero)Pauline letter, as we will see.

Herzer’s lengthy analysis shows that the structure of the letter and the individual terms and phrases that it uses may sound like Paul, but they are not

really like Paul. This is a fair enough observation, but it leads to a false conclusion, since the incongruity is precisely the point. If an author has his own point of view and wants to advance his own message, but at the same time wants to "sound" like someone else, he will use the characteristic words and phrases of the other, although obviously in his own sense. The result will be a book that on the surface sounds like that of the other author, but that underneath is quite different. That is why Ephesians and 2 Timothy seem both like and unlike Paul himself. On the surface there are numerous parallels to Paul's writings; dig deeper and they look odd by comparison. So too 1 Peter.

It is important in this connection to stress that no one is asking if Paul wrote 1 Peter. The question is whether the book sounds like Paul, and to pursue the question of why. The arguments that Herzer uses are precisely those that would be used to determine whether or not Paul was really the author of Colossians or 2 Thessalonians. But that is not the issue. Indeed, if 1 Timothy had Peter's name attached as the author, it would seem a lot less like one of Paul's writings than 1 Peter does. As Eugene Boring has observed in his recent survey of "First Peter in Recent Study," the pendulum has swung too far in the wrong direction, away from recognizing the Pauline character of the book.[46]

The structure of the book itself, as William Schutter has observed, is Pauline, with names of the sender and receiver, a tripartite division of the letter, and the conclusion. It is not a slavish imitation of the Pauline letters, but the resemblances are palpable.[47] Yet more significant are the striking instances of important Pauline words and phrases and other features. The following list is meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive.

The mission field, in Asia Minor, as already noted, appears to be Paul's[48]

1:7, 13; 4:13 (the word appears thirteen times in the Pauline corpus, e.g., Rom. 2:5; 8:19; 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Cor. 12:1, etc.)

God judges all impartially according to their deeds 1:17 (cf. Rom. 2 and 2 Cor. 5:1)

God raised Christ from the dead and "gave him glory" 1:21 (cf. Phil. 2:6–10)

The gospel as the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ 1:23 (cf. 1 Thess. 2:13)

Christian teaching as "milk" 2:2 (cf. 1 Cor. 3:2)

Giving oneself as a "sacrifice" 2:5 (cf. Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17)

The quotation of Isa. 28:16 in 2:6 (I am laying in Zion a stone …) and of Isa. 8:14 in 2:8 ("a stone of stumbling"; for both see Rom. 9:33)

The quotation of Hos. 2:25 in 2:10 (Rom. 9:25)

Opposition to “desires” connected with sarx 2:11 (cf. Gal. 5:16, 24)

“Be subject to every human institution” (2:13; cf. Rom. 13:1–7)

The view of Christ’s death as a substitutionary atonement, 2:24, 3:18 (this should not be thought of as a view shared by all early Christian writers with Paul; it is missing from the speeches of Acts—including Paul’s—and from the Gospel of Luke[49])

Dying to sin and living to righteousness 2:24 (Rom. 5:27–6:21)

“Do not return evil for evil” 3:9 (Rom. 12:17; verbatim agreements)

The “in Christ” formula 3:16; 5:10, 14 (in Paul, passim)

Baptism as salvation 3:21 (cf. Rom. 6:1–6)

Flesh and spirit applied to humans 4:6 (e.g., Rom. 8:5; Gal. 5:17)

“The end of all things is at hand” 4:7 (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11)

Preeminence of love 4:8 (1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:14)

4:10 (cf. 1 Cor. 12)

Rejoicing in sufferings 4:13 (cf. 2 Cor. 6:10; 13:9 and generally 2 Corinthians, where Paul revels in his sufferings 2 Cor. 1:3–7; 4:7–12; 11:23–30)

Suffering with Christ leads to glory 4:13 (cf. Rom. 8:17)

And as noted, the conclusion in 5:12–14, including the references to Silvanus (cf. 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1); Mark (Phlm. 24; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11); and the injunction to “Greet one another with a kiss” (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26)

Some of these words and phrases were, or became, “traditional stock.” But some are distinctively Pauline (“in Christ” etc.). And there are so many of them. It is striking that other features of the letter resonate with the Pauline tradition known from the Deutero-Pauline letters:

1:18 (cf. Titus 2:14)

The Haustafel of 2:18–3:7 (cf. Col. 3:18–4:6 and Eph. 5:22–6:9)

Especially, within these instructions, the command for wives to be submissive 3:1, 5 (cf. 1 Tim. 2:11–15; Eph. 5:22; and the interpolation at 1 Cor. 14:34–35)

The opposition to braided hair, gold, and costly clothes 3:3 (cf. 1 Tim. 2:9)

Leaders are to oversee (ἐπισκοπέω) the flock 5:2 (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1, 2; Tit. 1:7);

5:8 (cf. Eph. 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:6, 7, 11; 2 Tim. 2:26; 3:3; Tit. 2:3; but never in Paul)

There are simply too many Pauline parallels to be written off. They are scattered throughout the whole of this short letter. It is not a matter, as sometimes thought, of literary dependence on one or the other of the Pauline epistles (e.g., Romans and Ephesians).[50] This author is someone claiming to be Peter who is trying to sound like Paul. As Schenk and Fischer have stated the case, this author "actualizes for a new situation the Pauline heritage—and that in the name of Peter!"[51]

The counterarguments by those who refuse to see Pauline influences on the letter can be seen in their starkest form in the observation of Andreas Lindemann that the author of 1 Peter does not advance a view of justification by faith.[52] One could just as well argue, on the same ground, that 2 Corinthians is not Pauline. Paul Achtemeier too moves in the wrong direction, when he points out words and phrases of Paul not found in the letter ("flesh," "church," θλίψις, the old and new Adam, the body of Christ, righteousness by faith apart from the Law, the tension of Israel and the Church).[53] No one is claiming, or should claim, that the author of 1 Peter wanted to hit upon every Pauline theologoumenon in his brief letter. The author of the Pastoral epistles certainly did not do so, but one would be very hard pressed indeed to argue, on that ground, that he did not go out of his way to make his reader think that the letters were written by Paul. 1 Peter sounds much more like Paul than Titus does.

And it sounds much more like Paul than the Paul of Acts does. The Paul of Acts preaches to gentiles about the importance of Jesus without ever mentioning that his death was salvific. One could go a step farther. The Peter of 1 Peter sounds a lot more like Paul than the *Peter* of Acts does—even though Acts has as one of its overarching agendas to reconcile the two apostles theologically. The Peter of Acts does sound like the Paul of Acts (as opposed to the Paul of the undisputed letters); the Peter of 1 Peter sounds like the Paul of the letters (both undisputed and Deutero-). This is not necessarily because he happened to have access to the same letters of Paul that we have—although he may well have—but because however he inherited his Pauline traditions of Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology, he used them, to good effect, to make the letter written by "Peter" sound like Paul.

This is not to say that the author lacked an agenda of his own. In fact there are distinctive features of the letter that make it clearly stand out from what now survive as the undisputed Pauline letters.[54] Although the many differences from

the Pauline letters are interesting, it is important to stress again that this author was not trying to write a Deutero-Pauline letter, claiming to be Paul. He was writing a letter claiming to be Peter. But the letter, written in the name of Peter, sounds very much like a letter of Paul. So why did the author not simply claim to be Paul?

Reasons for the Forgery

The most widely proffered, but not fully convincing, explanation for why an author would claim to be Peter when writing like Paul is simply that he is trying to effect some kind of reconciliation between the two apostles, widely known to have quarreled publicly and widely thought to be at loggerheads about major theological and practical issues (as we will see at greater length in the next chapter). This is the view expressed crisply, for example, by Wolfgang Trilling, who (without invoking Baur) stresses that the names used at the beginning and end of the letter are key. Peter himself was known to be a leading authority figure in the church; Mark and Silvanus were Paul's coworkers for the church of Asia Minor. And strikingly, all three were closely tied with the church in Jerusalem, whence their mission started. And so the letter is meant to effect a broad reconciliation of Paul with the other apostles and the Jerusalem church, and to show that these Jerusalem apostles embraced Paul's teachings, rather than rejected them.[55]

There is much to commend this view, as we will see. But the problem with it and with others of its ilk (going back to Baur) is that it refuses to consider the actual content of the letter of 1 Peter in order to explain its pseudepigraphic function. Surely this is not the best way to proceed. The subject matter of the letter must have some bearing on the reason it was written.

This was recognized by Norbert Brox in an important article that lamented the fact that so much effort had been placed in determining the authorship of 1 Peter and exploring its Paulinism without ever considering the main point of what the letter is actually about.[56] Oddly enough, whereas Brox provides a clear assessment of the content of the letter, he never circles back, in the article, to the question of why the letter should be written in the name of Peter in terms that sound like Paul. Earlier he had put forth a rather feeble argument that since the letter was written in Rome it was naturally attributed to the chief authority there, Peter. The association of Peter with Rome may indeed be significant, but there is no reason, if the ascription is false, to think that the alleged location of its origin is true: it may just as well be that since the letter was written by "Peter" it was

said to be sent from Rome ("Babylon") because of Peter's close associations with the place. And we are still left with the question that Brox resolutely refuses to answer: Why Peter in particular? Why not Paul, also an authority on Roman soil? And is there really nothing in the substance of the letter, rather than the place of its origin, that makes sense of its Paulinisms?[57]

The letter is rich with themes and subthemes, but the one issue that ties together most of its sundry parts is the emphasis on suffering and endurance. The term πάσχω occurs more frequently in this short five-chapter epistle than in any other book of the New Testament—more than Luke-Acts combined, though suffering is a major concern there as well. For the author of 1 Peter, Christ suffered for the sake of others (2:21–24; 3:18), and his followers will follow in his steps and suffer as well (2:21; 4:1, 13). The believers' sufferings do not come from imperial authorities, so far as we can tell; these are to be obeyed as those who keep the public order (2:13–14). Instead, the opposition is unofficial and local, former friends and colleagues who are upset that, with their change of heart and lifestyle, the "Christians" no longer participate with them in their social and civic lives. These opponents of the Christians strike out at them in response (4:1–6). The Christians are to give no cause for persecution. They are to engage in no wrongdoing to warrant opposition (2:12; 3:16–17; 4:12–19). But they are always to be ready to explain why they live and believe as they do when called to account for it (3:15–16). Christians are constantly to recall that they are "exiles" in this world and will, as a result, be mistreated in this foreign land. But their real home is above, where they can expect an imperishable inheritance and great reward if they persevere to the end (1:1, 3–9, 11; 5:9–10).

The question of why this letter was forged must relate to the question of why it was written. It was written, presumably, to provide comfort and encouragement to Christians scattered in various places (the fictional designation: five provinces of Asia Minor) who were experiencing opposition and persecution at the hands of their former companions among the pagans. Why, as a subsidiary matter, was it written in the name of Peter in the style of Paul?

It may be worth observing, in this connection, that the book of Acts shares the dominant concern of 1 Peter with the problem of Christian persecution and suffering, and at the same time is completely committed to the question of the unity of the church, as manifest in the unity of the apostolic band. The presentation of the life, ministry, and proclamation of Paul in Acts is, in no small measure, affected by the author's concern to show that Paul aligned himself in toto with the Jerusalem church. And so, in contrast to Paul's own claims in

Galatians, Acts indicates that immediately after his conversion he went to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles (Acts 9); in further contrast with Galatians, where it appears that Paul needed to use some rhetorical force to persuade the other apostles to agree with his law-free gospel, the author of Acts portrays Peter as the first to recognize that gentiles do not need to observe Jewish Law to be followers of Jesus (Acts 10–11). The Jerusalem conference itself is a virtual love fest in which James, Peter, Paul, and everyone else who matters is in complete agreement (Acts 15). Yet again in contrast to Galatians, where the fall out in Antioch appears severe and possibly permanent (Gal. 2:11–14), in Acts Peter and Paul are portrayed as in complete harmony. So aligned are they that it is virtually impossible to distinguish their public proclamations: Peter sounds like Paul and Paul sounds like Peter.

These ultimate concerns of Acts, involving both external circumstances of the church (persecution and suffering) and internal affairs (complete harmony of the apostles), are intimately related. The harmony of the church in the face of suffering demonstrates that God is at work in the community, despite the hardships that it faces; he is creating a harmonious body in the midst of attempts at disruption. In fact, hardships are overcome, in no small measure, through the unified efforts of the Christians in the face of it. Where there are splits and divisions in the community, the power of the group is threatened to dissipate (Ananias and Sapphira in ch. 5; Simon Magus in ch. 8; the "men from Judea" in ch. 15). It is only through the forceful and God-driven power of harmony that internal problems are resolved, allowing the church to stand as one in the face of external opposition. In short, suffering requires a unified front.

This lesson is not restricted to the account of Acts. To pick just one other example we might consider the book of 1 Clement, written at roughly the same time as Acts, near the end of the first century, and like 1 Peter, closely connected to Rome. Here the leading issue is harmony in the church, and the problems of schism among the leaders. The leadership in the church of Corinth has been usurped and the Roman church is writing in order to restore order, in this case by compelling the upstarts who have taken over places of leadership to give up their positions and return their predecessors to power. The book is about much more than that—as frequently noted, it is a very long letter indeed—but the overarching theme is unity, so much so that it can well be classified as a kind of literary "homonoia speech."[58]

At the outset of the letter, in order to show the terrible results of jealousy and envy (endemic to the Corinthian church and its leadership), the anonymous author points to examples from the Old Testament, before giving examples "in

quite recent times." These latter are "athletic contenders … of our own generation" who suffered persecution from those who were envious of them, struggled, in fact, "even to death." He cites then just two "recent" examples among "the good apostles," Peter and Paul.

> Peter, who because of unjust jealousy bore up under hardships not just once or twice, but many times; and having thus borne his witness he went to the place of glory that he deserved. Because of jealousy and strife Paul pointed the way to the prize for endurance. Seven times he bore chains; he was sent into exile and stoned; he served as a herald in both the East and the West; and he received the noble reputation for his faith.… And so he was set free from this world and transported up to the holy place, having become the greatest example of endurance. (1 Clem. 5:4–7)

In this case the "envy and jealousy" come not from inside the community, but from outside. But it is striking that in a letter stressing the homonoia of the community, the author appeals to examples of suffering, and points to just these two apostles, Peter and Paul, and no others, unified with each other especially in their suffering.

1 Peter shares with Acts and 1 Clement this concern of Christian endurance in the face of persecution. It is allegedly sent to the churches of Asia Minor, where the disharmony of the apostles was particularly well known, as evidenced in Paul's comments about his controversy with Peter in his letter to the Galatians, sent to one of the provinces named in 1 Peter 1:1. The letter of 1 Peter, directed to suffering, at the same time shows that the apostolic band is harmonized. Much as we find in the speeches of Acts, Peter is made to sound like Paul, embracing theological views very much in accord with his apostolic companion. By inverse logic, the words of Paul are now shown to sound like the voice of Peter. There is no split in the leadership of the church, at the highest levels. Peter and Paul, later shown to be unified in their sufferings in Rome, are shown to be at harmony in a letter allegedly written from Rome. It is Peter, writing as if he were Paul, who urges the Christians to stand firm in their trials, to suffer only for the name of Christ, not for any wrongdoing. Moreover, they are to be harmonized among themselves: hence the Haustafel, which functions in much the same way as it does in the Deutero-Pauline letters, to promote unity in the body among people in various social relations to one another.

In short, 1 Peter is a book that shows Peter and Paul standing face-to-face and

agreeing point-by-point. If Christians are to face an antagonistic world with a unified front, then the unity of the ultimate leaders of the church—the apostles themselves—is particularly important. To show the deeply rooted harmony of the church in the face of ongoing opposition, an unknown author wrote a book of encouragement, claiming to be Peter, but sounding like Paul. This is a forgery that ostensibly deals with suffering of the Christians and that implicitly deals with the necessary corollary, the unity of the apostolic band.[59]

SECOND PETER

We have already considered 2 Peter in relation to its polemic against certain eschatological views. We can now look at the book more closely for its fervent support of the person and writings of Paul. As seen, 2 Peter has a completely different focus from 1 Peter. Here the problem addressed is not suffering caused by outsiders to the community, but false views promoted by insiders. These views concern the delay of the parousia, and the author is at great pains to emphasize that those who maintain a nonapocalyptic eschatology in the face of Jesus' non-appearance are not just misguided but are evil to the core, and profligate to boot. Several features of the second letter tie it to the first: it too is forged in the name of Peter, and precisely as his "second" letter (3:1). The salutations of the letters are close to each other in wording; the author who was a "witness to the sufferings of Christ" in the first letter (5:1) is one of the "eyewitnesses to his majesty" (1:16) in the second. Both letters warn against carousing either with former companions (in the first letter) or in the manner of the false teachers (in the second). Both stress the teachings of the prophets. And both are written, in part, to show Peter's support of Paul, indirectly in the first letter and far more directly and obviously in the second. Here Paul is invoked explicitly as an authority, indeed, his writings are deemed to be Scripture (3:15–16). Never did the two great apostles of the church appear more united.

The Pauline Character of the Opponents

The opponents attacked by the forger of the letter come from inside the Christian community.[60] They are those who had once come "to the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," but who came to be "entangled" and "overpowered" by the "defilements of the world" so that their "last state has become worse for them than the first" (2:20). They once knew the "way of righteousness" but they turned back from it (2:21). The miscreants attacked in chapter 2 are the

“scoffers” of chapter 3, who, “following their own passions,” deny that there is yet to be an apocalyptic crisis with the reappearance of Jesus (3:3–4). Just as the secessionists from the Johannine community were labeled “anti-Christs” (1 John 2:18)—when they may well have viewed themselves as true adherents of the Christian gospel—so too these opponents are said to be “denying the Master who purchased them” (2:1).

More specifically, these opponents are Pauline Christians. They have Paul’s writings, they interpret these writings, and they evidently treat them as authoritative texts, using them to establish their own perspectives, deemed by the author as highly aberrant (3:15–16). It is worth reflecting on the fact that the forger of this letter attacks these opponents for their licentious and loose living while admitting that their views derive from an apostolic authority, even if in corrupted form. This too seems reminiscent of polemics within the Johannine community, where some members have split off from the others (1 John 2: 18–19) because of certain Christological views (Christ did not come “in the flesh”) that the author claims led to willfully sinful lifestyles (3:4–10; 4:7–12; they refuse even to love one another). Theology and ethics were intimately linked in the minds of early Christian polemicists.

But what is there in the Pauline tradition that could possibly lead to the views attacked by the author of 2 Peter? We have already considered the “Pauline” eschatology. With respect to the ethics, is it possible that the persons attacked in 2 Peter derived these as well not from other sources, or from their naturally reprobate natures and desires, but from Pauline teaching, taken in a direction that the author of the letter opposes? More specifically, is it possible that they, like the authors of Ephesians and Titus, interpreted Paul’s teaching of justification “apart from the works of the Law” to mean that what mattered was faith, not doing “good deeds” (see Eph. 2:8–9; Tit. 3:5)? We would be hard pressed to affirm that they actually took such a view to the extreme of supporting acts of moral degeneracy, but the view could be seen as leading in that direction by the author of 2 Peter. Some such view of moral living, as we will see, is attacked by James in a thinly disguised attack on Paul, or at least on a later interpretation of Paul, presumably among Pauline Christians. Specifically we learn that the opponents of 2 Peter “promise freedom” (2:19), again, a possible reminiscence of Paul’s own teaching, of the believers’ “freedom from the Law.”

The opponents are also said to “despise authority” and to “revile the glorious ones” in 2:10. It is interesting, in this connection, to observe the opposite position evidently taken in Colossians, in its polemic against those who “worship angels” (Col. 2:18). As we will see later, the issue comes to a head with the letter

of Jude, where a direct polemic against the view adopted by Colossians may be involved. In either event, as with the teachings of eschatology and ethics, the status of angelic beings may have been differently evaluated in various parts of the Pauline community.

The Forged Counter-Position

The author of 2 Peter is principally concerned to attack the Pauline corruptions of the faith by proffering the "correct" interpretation of Paul, in the name of his fellow apostle, Peter. In particular, Peter and Paul see eye-to-eye on the crucial issues of eschatology and ethics. It is interesting to note, as well, that by implication they see eye-to-eye on the interpretation of Scripture. This is an important issue because of what we know about the historical Paul and Peter, and their falling out in Antioch precisely over the understanding of the relevance of Scripture, specifically Scripture's kosher food laws and their implications (Gal. 2:11–14). We have no way of knowing how the historical Peter responded to Paul's charges of hypocrisy, and there are reasons for thinking that, in the general opinion of those present, Peter got the better of the argument.[61] And in particular, we have no way of knowing whether the deep rift that so obviously troubled Paul, all those years later, was ever healed. But we can know that the issue involved the interpretation of Scripture and the question of its relevance to matters of real importance to the ongoing life of the Christian community, comprising both Jew and gentile.

Some later authors went out of their way to smooth over the differences between the two apostolic leaders, none more so than the book of Acts, as we shall see. But the efforts at palliation are at least as evident in the forged letter of Peter we are considering here. In this case Paul's views—on all topics—are compatible with Scripture; in fact they themselves are Scripture (3:15–16). Peter is the one who has the correct interpretation of Paul's writings, which he cherishes and regards as an ultimate authority for the life of the community. Peter and Paul are completely aligned on all matters of authority and interpretation. There is no rift here. By implication, then, even where Paul is not explicitly invoked—as in the attack on the licentious living of those who embrace "freedom" in chapter 2—he is implicitly on board with the polemic. This, then, is Paul fighting against Paul, the true Paul attacking the misinterpretations of Paul. And all in the name of Peter.

It would be interesting to know what the real, historical Paul—not to mention the real, historical Peter—would have to say about all this. With Peter we are

handicapped, in having not a single word from his pen (since, indeed, he never used a pen). But we do have the writings of Paul, and it is worth noting that the views he stakes out in his letters are not those attacked in this one, advanced on his authority (3:15–16). There was not just a two-way split in the Pauline community, between those holding to an apocalyptic eschatology and those holding to a realized eschatology or between those living "lawlessly" and those insisting on a strict morality. As normally happens in history, things were far messier, with groups and individuals holding allegiance to Paul but advocating a variety of views, which covered the entire spectrum of options. How could that be? How could later Christians claiming Paul as an authority advocate differing—even opposing views—in his name? It should always be recalled that "authorities" may authorize certain views, but they do not necessarily dictate what those views will be.

And so, whereas Paul insisted that the end of all things was soon to happen with the reappearance of Jesus from heaven, and that he himself would be living to see it (e.g., 1 Thess. 4:13–18), other Paulinists—some in his own lifetime, but even more later—insisted that even though there was indeed to be an apocalyptic crisis with the coming of Jesus, there was a divinely ordained delay in the proceedings. That is roughly the view of 2 Thessalonians and 2 Peter, and the view of the Paulinist who produced Luke and Acts. Others of Paul's followers continued to think there would be *something* yet to come, in some undefined moment of the future, but that there was no urgency about the matter and that this was not a central component of the Pauline message. That is the view of such works as Colossians and, especially, Ephesians. And yet other Paulinists maintained that the end had already come in some sense in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and that believers were already enjoying the full benefits of salvation in the here and now. That is the view that Ephesians may be leaning toward, but it does not come to full expression in any of the Pauline writings that have survived from the early centuries—only in the views that are opposed as arising within Pauline communities, by Pauline believers who have left us no writings, such as the opponents of 2 Timothy and 2 Peter.

Paul himself was a lightning rod for all of these positions. Moreover, just as he was said to have advocated a "lawless" lifestyle, possibly in his own lifetime (Rom. 3:8), so too his authority was invoked by advocates of strict morality. In particular that happens here, in this letter of 2 Peter, which insists both that lawless living is contrary to Pauline teaching and that on this, and all other matters, the two great apostles stood in firm agreement.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

We have already seen two of the major thematic concerns of the book of Acts in our discussion of 1 Peter: the suffering of the Christians at the hands of antagonistic outsiders and the far-flung unity of the church, seen in particular in the harmony between Paul, the ultimate hero of the account, and the Jerusalem apostles, especially Peter, who dominate the action in the first third of the narrative. The latter theme begins to appear almost immediately after Paul's conversion in chapter 9. After leaving Damascus, he heads directly to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and, with Barnabas's assistance, becomes their close associate (Acts 9:26–29). It is in the next chapter that the law-free Gospel for the gentiles is revealed in a vision—not to Paul, but to Peter, who acts on his new knowledge and converts gentiles in the Cornelius episode. It is Peter, then, who announces to the Jerusalem apostles that gentiles have received the spirit and been "given repentance unto life" (11:18). Paul's views are not controversial in this book. They are the views of the apostles before him, who act out their convictions of the law-free Gospel to the gentiles even before he is on the mission field, and who, most famously, endorse his own missionary activities at the climactic Jerusalem conference in chapter 15. Here Paul scarcely needs to defend himself, as Peter, Barnabas, and James all unite in affirming his mission to the gentiles in the most emphatic terms. The apostles of Jerusalem then send Paul back to his mission field with their blessing and enthusiastic support. Paul's mission in this account is both divinely sanctioned and wholeheartedly endorsed by the leaders of Jerusalem.

The apostolic unity is set out somewhat more subtly in the speeches of Acts, where, as I noted before, one is hard pressed to differentiate between the words of the Galilean fisherman and the Hellenistic intellectual. Paul's speeches sound little like the Paul we know from the surviving letters. It is likely that the earlier speeches in Acts are not those of the historical Peter either. Their unity of content results from the fact that they derive from the mind and pen of one man, the author of the narrative.

In order to effect this astounding harmony of Paul and his apostolic predecessors, especially Peter but also, notably, James, the author was compelled to smooth over their real, historical differences. The historical Peter had a serious falling out with the historical Paul, prompted by the appearance of people from James, when they both were in Antioch (Galatians 2). None of that can be found in Acts, where Paul's message and lifestyle conform closely with that of the Jerusalem apostles before him, including most emphatically the head of the Jerusalem church, James, and its leading spokesperson, Peter. This

internal harmony is related to the broader concerns of Acts, in particular its celebration of the importance of Paul, his divine conversion and commission, his incredible miraculous powers, his persuasive preaching and teaching, his conversion of Jews and gentiles in moving the gospel through the world to the capital city of the empire, Rome itself. The book is, in no small measure, an encomium on Paul. But is it a forgery?

It is important to remember that a literary forgery, as I am using the term, refers to a text that makes a false authorial claim. In most Christian forgeries, an author claims to be someone other than who he really is in order to authorize his writing. In Chapter Three I explained a variety of ways authors make false authorial claims, one of which I termed an "embedded forgery." I repeat that discussion here: there are a number of writings from antiquity that do not explicitly claim to be authored by a well-known person, but instead use embedding devices, such as first-person narratives, without differentiating between the first person and the author. In these instances the reader naturally assumes that the person speaking in the first person is the writer of the account. A good example occurs in the Ascension of Isaiah, whose author does not self-identify at the outset, but instead provides an anonymous historical framework that involves Isaiah and that appears very much like the prose narrative sections of the book of Isaiah itself. Part way through the narrative, however, and at key points throughout, the revelation given through Isaiah begins to be delivered in the first person. The author of the account does not indicate that he is now quoting someone else. The reader assumes that the author has begun speaking about what he himself experienced. This provides an unimpeachable authority for the account: it is revealed by none other than Isaiah. The author is not Isaiah, however. This was a later writer making an implicit, but false, authorial claim. The book, then, is what I have been calling an embedded forgery.

The book of Acts, like the Ascension of Isaiah, is anonymous. But does it make a false authorial claim? The irony is that if it does so, the claim is made anonymously. That is to say, on no reckoning can Acts be termed pseudepigraphic (i.e., it is not a book inscribed with a false name). But it is also to be recalled that there are other instances of what I earlier termed non-pseudepigraphic forgeries, in which an author claims to be someone other than who he is, without actually naming himself. This is true, for example, of Ecclesiastes, whose author is allegedly the son of David ruling in Jerusalem, fantastically rich and wise. The author does not use the name Solomon, but that is clearly who he is claiming to be. He was not Solomon, however, but an unknown author living centuries later. Ecclesiastes is, then, a non-

pseudepigraphic forgery. So too, I will be arguing, is the book of Acts, whose author wanted his readers to understand that he was for a time a traveling companion of Paul, even though he was not. This author used clear embedding devices in order to make his claim good. The claim functions to authorize his account, as an eyewitness to some of the events he narrates and as a bona fide authority even for those events that he did not personally observe. It was a remarkable strategy, and it proved to be extraordinarily effective, as readers to this day continue to attribute the book to Paul's traveling companion, Luke.

The "We-Passages"

The key to any discussion of the authorship of Acts is provided by the so-called "we-passages" that occur on four occasions (depending on how one accounts), narratives in which the author shifts from third-to first-person plural narrative. The scholarship on these passages may seem daunting in its scope, but it is even more disheartening in its execution, one suggestion even more implausible than the one preceding. Several full-length studies have been devoted to the question, the most recent by William S. Campbell, but including earlier important contributions by C. Thornton and J. Wehnert.[62]

The four passages in question are Acts 16:10–17, 20:5–15, 21:1–18, and 27:1–28:16. They include first-person-plural travel narratives (with Paul) from Troas to Philippi (16:10–11), from Philippi to Troas (20:5–6), from Troas to Miletus (20:13–15), from Miletus to Caesarea (21:1–9), from Caesarea to Jerusalem (21:15–17), from Caesarea to Fair Havens (27:1–8), and from Malta to Rome (28:11–16). It cannot be argued that first-person narrative is simply Luke's preferred technique for travelogues, given the third-person narratives of 14:20–28, 18:18–23, and elsewhere. But on the whole, the travel sections of these passages are narrated in the first person, and the scenes after travel in the third person.

In beginning to explore and explain these passages, it is important to note that they are not the only occurrence of the first person in the book. On the contrary, the author introduces his narrative in the first-person singular in the prefatory dedication to Theophilus. On any reckoning, the "we" of the later narratives must be seen as inclusive of the "I" of the preface. In other words, however one explains the we-passages from the perspectives of literary or source criticism, the author is making a back reference to an earlier passage, and thereby claiming not only to be the author of the narrative but also a participant in parts of it. This will be the gist of the argument that follows, that Acts is not simply a collection

of narratives about the earliest Christian community. Its author wants to make an authorial claim to have been an eyewitness to some of the events that he narrates, so as to authenticate the narrative claims he makes, even though many of these claims can be shown to be false, as can his assertion to have been an eyewitness to the life and preaching of Paul.

I begin the analysis with several observations about the passages in question. First, it should be observed that the we-sections are sometimes interrupted by short third-person narratives (20:9–12, 27:9–14, 27:21–26, 28:3–6), and that they contain a number of details that appear, at least, to be unnecessary to the narrative. These details, however, serve a useful function, as recognized by Samuel Byrskog: “Precisely, then, as seemingly ad hoc pieces of information within passages in first-person plural, they provide, whether historically accurate or not, the narrative with a realistic stamp.”[63]

By far the most surprising aspect of the we-passages, however, apart from their existence at all, is their frequently noted abrupt beginnings and endings. It is their sudden and unexplained disappearance that is most unsettling. When did the author leave the company and for what reason? These and other related problems can be seen in the first of the passages, 16:10–17. How is it that “we” included Paul in 16:10 and 11, but then are differentiated from Paul in 16:17? That may make sense if an author had wanted to start easing out of the use of the first-person plural as a narrative ploy, but it is hard to understand if the narrative is a historically accurate description of a real life situation by an author who was there. Moreover, if “we” were with Paul when he rebuked the spirit of the possessed girl, how is it that only Paul and Silas were seized, not “we”? Did the eyewitness leave the company in 16:18 suddenly and for no expressed reason? If so, why is he still in Philippi much later in 20:6?

So too in the next passages in question, in chapters 20 and 21. Why is the narrative provided in the first person when traveling to Miletus (20:15) but then shifts to the third person once there? Was the author not present for the prayer in v. 36? Why did they not bring “us” to the ship in 20:38 if he sailed with Paul in the next verse? And in the next chapter, why does the author accompany Paul to Jerusalem in 21:18 and then disappear without an explanation or a trace in 21:19?

I will be arguing in what follows that the best explanation for these abrupt beginnings and endings is that the first-person pronoun was used selectively to place the author in the company of Paul, thereby authenticating his account. As Byrskog expresses the matter: “By presenting a narrator who speaks in first-person plural, the author himself appears, albeit vaguely, as present in the arena

of history. Clearly, from a narrative point of view, the author is included among the 'we,' and that is sufficient.… The 'we' are, within the narrative of Acts, historical witnesses to the details and vividness of Paul's words and deeds."[64]

Various Solutions and Their Problems

The we-passages have generated a considerable amount of spilled ink. Nearly all the explanations can be summarized under four rubrics.

1. The Author of Acts Was a Companion of Paul on Some of His Travels

This explanation of the we-passages is the oldest and probably the most widespread. It was the dominant view before the modern critical study of the New Testament began. It is riddled with problems, however, and is rarely supported among scholars outside the ranks of the theologically conservative proponents of the complete historical accuracy of the narrative. For in fact, whatever one might say about "Luke," he does not appear to have been exceptionally knowledgeable about Paul, his life, and his message.[65] There are simply too many basic, fundamental, and detailed discrepancies between what Paul says about himself in the letters that he almost certainly wrote and the accounts of Acts. There is no need here to provide a detailed delineation. The discrepancies involve (1) his itinerary, with issues both large and small: after his conversion did Paul immediately go to speak with the apostles in Jerusalem, as Acts claims, or not, as Paul claims, emphatically, with an oath, in Gal. 1:18–20? When he traveled to Athens, was Timothy with him as in 1 Thessalonians 3, or not as in Acts 17? Was the Jerusalem conference Paul's third visit to Jerusalem or not? And on and on. (2) His missionary message. How could a companion of Paul think that Paul proclaimed idolatry as simply an honest mistake for which God was forgiving (as in Acts 17; contrast Romans 1)? Or how could an eyewitness and associate of Paul neglect to mention his theology of the cross? How could Paul preach to a crowd of gentiles and not even mention that it is Jesus' death that puts a person into a right standing before God (14:15–17; 17:22–31; cf. 24:10–21: and elsewhere, even to Jews)? (3) His life. The general portrayal of Paul as The Good Jew who never did anything in violation of the Jewish Law, rumors to the contrary notwithstanding, is hard indeed to reconcile with the Paul of the letters, who had no qualms at all with being a gentile to the gentiles, and who fell out with Peter on just these grounds.

2. The Author Used a Source for These Passages

More commonly it is thought that the author of Acts, not a participant in Paul's mission at any time, made use of a written document—usually thought of as a travel itinerary—that he incorporated more or less wholesale into his account without bothering to edit out the first-person-plural pronouns.[66] Sometimes the theory is made a bit more complex, sophisticated, and, well, creative. In his detailed, full-length study, for example, Thornton maintains that the "itinerary" involved travel notes taken by Titus, provided to Luke (the real Luke, author of Acts) in scenes at which he, the author Luke, was actually present.[67] Oddly enough, Thornton argues that the "we" figure was not necessarily with Paul *only* for those events that are narrated in the first person, a concession that somewhat undercuts his case. Nor does the theory explain the abrupt beginnings and endings of the we-passages. Equally imaginative is the view of Wehnert that the passages come from an actual eyewitness—in this case, Silas—who was therefore reliable, and who passed along his account to the author orally; the first-person narrative was used, then, in order to signal to the reader that at this point the account was based on a source who was present at the event.[68] Similarly, in a more recent but much briefer analysis, Wedderburn maintains that the first person is used to signal a source who was actually present, as opposed to a written source. As it turns out, mirabile dictu, that source was none other than Luke.[69]

The highly speculative character of these particular views has not done much to win many converts, but they must be acknowledged as serious attempts to grapple with an intractable problem. Their real difficulty, however, has been widely recognized: there is nothing in the passages, other than the first-person pronoun, to raise any suspicion that we are dealing with material that has come from a source.[70] The passages are not distinct, stylistically or in any other significant way, from the surrounding narratives and they do not cohere, stylistically or in any other way, with each other in any unusual way. The stylistic unity of the passages with the rest of Acts was recognized as long ago as Harnack and emphasized in a classic study by Cadbury.[71] The most thorough study has been by Darryl Schmidt, who finds no "significant patterns that characterize all four sections" and notes that those syntactical constructions that seem noteworthy within them can be found elsewhere in Acts. Schmidt, in short, did not discover "any basis in the syntactic style of the text for isolating this material from the rest of Acts. It is neither uniform enough or distinctive enough to make that possible."[72]

And so, the stylistic unity of the work shows that whoever wrote the rest of the narrative of Acts also wrote the we-passages. Moreover, one cannot argue

that the author edited out the stylistic oddities of the source otherwise to make it conform to his narrative, since the reason for thinking that the passages come from a different source in the first place is a stylistic oddity (the shift in person). If he edited everything else, why did the author of Acts not edit the pronouns? It is not convincing to argue that the first person pronouns were left in the source—or added to it—precisely in order to show that at this point of the narrative the author is using a source, even a particularly reliable source. When are first-person pronouns ever used in narratives to indicate the presence of a source?[73] What they are used for, with remarkable frequency, as will be seen shortly, is to verify that the author was an eyewitness to the accounts being narrated. First-person narratives authorize an account as having come from someone who would know the truth of what he relates, not in order to indicate that the author has used someone else's account.

3. The Use of First-Person Accounts in Narratives of Sea-Travel

First suggested by E. Plümacher and argued most influentially by Vernon Robbins, this is the view that the author of Acts was following standard narratological practice from antiquity, where travels on sea were typically narrated in the first person.[74] As Robbins puts it, after citing examples from the Odyssey, the Aeneid, Alcaeus, Heraclitus, Aeschylus, Varro, and others, "There is a natural propensity for portraying sea voyages through the medium of first-person narration."[75]

As attractive as the view appeared for a time, it has come under sustained attack by those who have looked yet deeper into the matter.[76] John Reumann, for example, rejects "the notion that 'we' for a sea voyage was a 'classical convention' in antiquity, let alone a necessary feature of style."[77] And after giving numerous counterexamples, Susan Praeder concludes: "There are first person and third person sea voyages in ancient literature, no passage is set in first person narration simply because it is a sea voyage, and there are no convincing parallels to the shifts from third person narration to first person narration in Acts."[78] Instead, significantly for my purposes here, "first person and third person narration are signs of authorial participation and nonparticipation, respectively."[79]

In my view, that is exactly right. With the case of Acts, however, the claim to participation is false, since the author was not, in fact, a companion of Paul. And a book that makes a false authorial claim is a forgery.

4. The Author Is Making a False Claim to Have Been an Eyewitness

Historians were commonly maligned in antiquity for not knowing what they were talking about. Polybius, for example attacks the historical narratives of Timaeus because all of his knowledge was based on book learning, rather than personal experience. His fault: “he does not write from the evidence of his eyes.”[80] As a nonparticipant in the kinds of stories he narrates “he is guilty of many errors and misstatements, and if he ever comes near the truth he resembles those painters who make their sketches from stuffed bags.” He is like other historians “who approach the work in this bookish mood. We miss in them the vividness of facts, as this impression can only be produced by the personal experience of the author.” Polybius goes on, then, to malign historical writers “who have not been through the events themselves.”[81]

In his first preface, the author of Luke-Acts stresses his personal involvement in doing his research (book learning, of sorts) into the events he is to narrate (Luke 1:1–4). As we have seen, the first person “we” necessarily embodies the “I” of the two prefaces to the two works. It is best to understand the use of the plural pronoun in Acts as an authorizing technique. In using the pronoun in this way Luke is not—contrary to what is widely claimed—doing something highly unusual in Christian or other literature. Quite the contrary, the first-person pronoun (both singular and plural) was widely used in ancient texts, Christian and otherwise, precisely in order to provide authority for the account, as a rapid survey can show. This list provides a number of instances, and is meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive:

John 21:24—“And we know that his testimony is true.” The author differentiates himself (as is not always recognized) from the “beloved disciple” to imply a personal acquaintance with him and his testimony and to provide a firsthand assurance of the accuracy of his testimony.

1 Cor. 15:8—“As to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.” Paul uses the first person to stress that he can attest to the reality of the physical resurrection of Jesus.

2 Cor. 12:2—“I know a person in Christ who, fourteen years ago, was snatched up to the third heaven.” The “person” of course was probably Paul himself, and his account in the first person (“I know a person”) provides authorization that in fact this is an event that really happened; in the context the narrative is used, in part, to establish Paul’s credentials in the face of Corinthian opposition.

2 Peter 1:16–19—“We did not follow cleverly devised myths.… We heard this voice from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word made more sure.” The author, falsely claiming to be Peter,

uses a first-person-plural narrative to place himself with other apostles in the presence of Jesus at the crucial moment of the Transfiguration in order to validate his own message and to denigrate the message of his opponents (who were *not* eyewitnesses).

1 John 1:1–4—"What we have heard and seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled … and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life … what we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you so that you might have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ; and we are writing these things to you so that our joy might be made complete." The prologue to 1 John is narrated in first-person plural, and it specifically stresses that the author and unnamed others (implied: the other apostles) had a real, tactile experience of the Word of Life.[82] The physicality of the manifestation of the word—stressed in the Prologue—plays an enormous role in the rest of the account, in opposition to the secessionists who have denied that "Jesus Christ came in the flesh." By narrating it in the first-person plural, the writer validates his alternative version, on the basis of personal experience.

Gospel of Peter 26, 59–60—"But I and my companions were grieving and went into hiding, wounded in heart. For we were being sought out by them as if we were evildoers who wanted to burn the Temple. While these things were happening, we fasted and sat mourning and weeping, night and day, until the Sabbath.…" "But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, wept and grieved; and each one returned to his home, grieving for what had happened. But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew, took our nets and went off to the sea. And with us was Levi, the son of Alphaeus."[83] Un-like the canonical Gospels, this one is written in the first person by Peter, an unimpeachable authority for the accounts narrated.

The (Greek) Apocalypse of Peter, passim—"When the Lord was seated on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him. And we besought him and entreated him.… 'Declare to us what are the signs of your coming and of the end of the world.… And our Lord said to us.… And I, Peter, answered and said to him.… And he showed me in his right hand the souls of all men." And so on. In the Akhmim fragment the realms are seen by Peter himself: "And I saw also another place opposite that one, very squalid; and it was a place of punishment. … And I saw the murders and those who were accomplices.…"[84] The first-person narrative authorizes the account: Peter himself was given the tour of heaven and hell by Jesus.

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, passim—"The Savior … said to me, Peter, blessed are those who belong to the Father.…" "When he said this, I saw him apparently being arrested by them. I said, "What do I see Lord?" The entire account is narrated in the first person to verify the accuracy of what is reported to be the teachings of Jesus and the true account of his crucifixion.[85]

The Apocryphon of John:—"One day when John the brother of James … went up to the temple,… a Pharisee named Arimanios came up to him and said to him, "Where is your teacher, whom you followed?": I said to him.… The Pharisee said to me.… When I John heard this … I was distressed within.… At the moment I was thinking about this, look the heavens opened, all creation under heaven lit up, and the world shook." The first-person narrative authorizes the vision that follows, and the mystical revelation that it entails of the origins of the pleroma and the world of humans.[86]

The Apocryphon of James, passim—"You have asked me to send you a secret book revealed to me and Peter by the master, and I could not turn you down. … Be careful not to communicate to many people this book, that the Savior did not want to communicate even to all of us, his twelve disciples."[87] The author can assure the reader of the truth claims of the book, available only to the chosen few.

Many others of the Nag Hammadi writings, for the same reasons.

Irenaeus, *To Florinus*, quoted by Eusebius in *H.E.* 5. 20—"When I was still a boy I saw you in Lower Asia in Polycarp's company. … I have a clearer recollection of events at that time than of recent happenings … so that I can describe the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and talked, his goings out and comings in, the character of his life, his personal appearance, his addresses to crowded congregations. I remember how he spoke of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord; how he repeated their words from memory; and how the things that he had heard them say about the Lord, his miracles and his teaching, things that he had heard direct from the eyewitnesses of the Word of Life, were proclaimed by Polycarp.…" Irenaeus can vouch for his firsthand knowledge of Polycarp, who had firsthand knowledge of the apostle John. Since Eusebius quotes this correspondence, he stands within a direct line of eyewitnesses back to the apostles of Jesus.

Protevangelium Jacobi, ch. 18—"But I, Joseph, was walking, and I was not walking. I looked up to the vault of the sky, and I saw it standing still, and into the air, and I saw that it was greatly disturbed, and the birds of the sky were at rest. I looked down to the earth and saw a bowl laid out for some workers who

were reclining to eat."[88] The chapter was not found in the oldest version of the Protevangelium but was added by a later redactor; its move from the third-person narrative about Joseph to a firsthand account of how time stood still when the Son of God appeared serves to authenticate the miraculous event of the incarnation by an eyewitness.

Infancy Gospel of Thomas 1—"I, Thomas the Israelite, make this report to all of you, my brothers among the Gentiles, that you may know the magnificent childhood activities of our Lord Jesus Christ—all that he did after being born in our country."[89] In the epilogue found in the Latin version, an editor adds the claim, "I have written the things that I have seen … and behold, the entire house of Israel has seen … how many signs and miracles Jesus did.…" Both are editorial additions to the text, making them redactional forgeries. Both function to verify the accuracy of the reporting.

Pseudo-Matthew, prologue—"I, James, son of Joseph the carpenter, who have lived in the fear of God, have carefully recorded everything I have seen with my own eyes that occurred at the time of the birth of the holy Mary and of the Savior."[90] The claim to be Jesus' half-brother allows the author to set forth his narrative as deriving from an eyewitness.

The Apostolic Constitutions 1.1 and passim—"The apostle and elders to all those who from among the gentiles have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.…" "When we went forth among the Gentiles to preach the word of life.…" "We the twelve assembled together at Jerusalem …" "I Philip make this constitution. … I Bartholomew make this constitution … I Thomas make this constitution.… I Matthew … make a constitution.…" "I James, the son of Alphaeus, make a constitution.…" These directions for church leaders and polity come straight from the apostles themselves.

The Martyrdom of Polycarp 9.15—"As he entered the stadium a voice came to Polycarp from heaven.… No one saw who had spoken, but those among our people who were there heard the voice." "And as the fire blazoned forth we beheld a marvel—we to whom it was granted to see, who have also been preserved to report the events to the others." At precisely the moments at which the reader may doubt the account—when, that is, a supernatural element is introduced—the author introduces a first-person voice to assure the reader of the accuracy of what is related.[91]

The Martyrdom of Ignatius, 7—"Now these things took place on the thirteenth day before the Kalends of January, that is, on the twentieth of December, Sun and Senecio being then the consuls of the Romans for the second time. Having

ourselves been eyewitnesses of these things.… When, therefore, we had with great joy witnessed these things, and had compared our several visions together, we sang praise to God, the giver of all good things, and expressed our sense of the happiness of the holy [martyr]; and now we have made known to you both the day and the time [when these things happened].”[92] The accuracy of the report is guaranteed by having come from eyewitnesses.

The Martyrdom of Marian and James, 1—“I refer to Marian and James.… Both of these … were bound to me not only by our common sharing in the mystery of our faith but also by the fact that we lived together in a family spirit.… And it was not without reason that in their close intimacy they laid upon me the task which I am about to fulfill.”[93] A close companion of the martyrs presents himself as a particularly reliable witness to their deaths. The first person recurs throughout the narration, although the narrator, for some reason, is, unlike his companions, not in danger.

In some of these scattered examples, the first-person narrative is in the singular, in others, the plural. In some instances it dominates from beginning to end (Coptic Apocalypse of Peter); in others the first person appears after an initial third-person narration (Protevangelium; Apocryphon of John); in yet others the first person disappears into a third-person narration (Infancy Thomas). In a number of cases the first person is not identified, but is anonymous (John 1; 21; 1 John 1; Martyrdom of Polycarp; Martyrdom of Marian and James). Whether these first-person narratives represent accurate claims (Irenaeus?) or not (Apocalypse of Peter) they all are unified in having one thing in common. They all function to authenticate the reports in which they are embedded.

We have already seen from Polybius the importance of eyewitness testimony in antiquity in general. This can be seen, as well, in the writings of Thucydides on the pagan side and Josephus on the Jewish, as Campbell has recently stressed. For Thucydides, for example, the movement to the first person “emphasizes the author/narrator’s knowledge and authority.”[94] Indeed, for all these authors, “The author/narrator frequently attempts to establish his trustworthiness by lifting up his personal involvement in or thorough research and critical assessment of the subject matter.”[95]

Eyewitness testimony was certainly important for the early Christians as well. Consider the words of Theophilus of Antioch:

> Seeing that writers are fond of composing a multitude of books for vainglory,—some concerning gods, and wars and chronology, and some,

> too, concerning useless legends and other such labor in vain—on their account I also will not grudge the labour of compendiously setting forth to you, God helping me, the antiquity of our books … that you may not grudge the labor of reading it, but may recognise the folly of other authors. For it was fit that they who wrote should themselves have been eyewitnesses of those things concerning which they made assertions, or should accurately have ascertained them from those who had seen them; for they who write of things unascertained beat the air. (*ad Autolycum* 3, 1–2)[96]

It is interesting in this connection that Augustine's nemesis Faustus denied that the Gospel of Matthew was valid precisely because it did not contain an eyewitness report of Jesus' life and ministry (August., *Contra Faust*. 17, 1).

The relevance of these parallels for understanding the we-passages of Acts should be obvious. Here too is an anonymous first-person narrator. Does this first-person narration function like the other examples we have cited, six of them from the New Testament, or not? Without accepting Wehnert's somewhat extravagant theory of these passages, it is easy to agree with his general assessment of the function of the first-person narratives:

> The narrated subject of a text … periodically becomes the narrating subject, takes the place of the author and in doing so vouches for the unconditional reliability of the depiction for the reader.… Who could narrate one's own story better and more precisely than the person directly affected by it?[97]

A similar view was earlier expressed by van Unnik, "He who could claim to have been present at a certain event, was a generally accepted source of true information … autopsia was a safeguard against fallacies and opened the way of the truth."[98] Or consider the concession of Wedderburn: "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the author wishes to suggest that he was present on the journeys described and that the first person plural signals this participation."[99]

Except that the author of Luke was *not* a personal companion of Paul who participated in his journeys. His claim to have been a companion is false. This, then, is a book making a false authorial claim. It is, in other words, a forgery.

The History of "Our" Reception

To take the matter a step further, it is important to notice how the we-passages function in Acts. They put the writer in connection with Paul on his journeys, making him an eyewitness and thus self-authorizer of the account. In light of the genre considerations discussed by Plümacher and Robbins, it makes considerable sense that the author has inserted these references into passages in which sea travel was involved. That was not a requirement of sea-travel narratives, as Praeder and others have shown; but it was a common enough characteristic of them, and so the sea passages made a sensible location for the occasional insertion of a self-verifying but false self-reference. He could just as well have chosen other places, had he wanted.

In support of the thesis that the author created these first-person narratives in order to establish himself as a participant in the ministry of Paul, it is well worth observing how these passages—and the larger narrative of Acts within which they were embedded—were read in antiquity. Here there is no ambiguity about the evidence at all. The we-passages were everywhere taken to be clear and certain indications that the author was an eyewitness to the ministry of Paul and that his account, as a result, was well-informed and accurate. This "history of reception" as we will see, gives the lie to those scholars today who maintain that if an author wanted to portray himself as an eyewitness, he would have had to do a much better and thorough job of it. The job this author did was thorough enough as it was and his editorial work was fully effective. Because of these we-passages, from the earliest (known) readers of Acts down to our own day, it has simply been assumed that the account was produced by a companion of Paul and is, therefore, to be trusted.

Our earliest extensive references to the text[100] come in the writings of Irenaeus, who indicates that the author, "Luke was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-labourer in the Gospel, he himself clearly evinces." Irenaeus goes on to mention the we-passages, and then explicates the significance of having an eyewitness produce the accounts: "As Luke was present at all these occurrences, he carefully noted them down in writing, so that he cannot be convicted of falsehood or boastfulness, because all these [particulars] proved both that he was senior to all those who now teach otherwise, and that he was not ignorant of the truth" (*Adv. Haer*. 3.14.1).[101]

At about the same time—assuming a late second century date for the text[102] —we have the words of the Muratorian Fragment: "The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as one zealous for the law, composed it in his own name, according to [the general] belief" (2–6). Later it indicates:

> The Acts of all the apostles were written in one book. For “most excellent Theophilus” Luke compiled the individual events that took place in his presence—as he plainly shows by omitting the martyrdom of Peter as well as the departure of Paul from the city [of Rome] when he journeyed to Spain. (34–39).[103]

It is worth noting that already by this time—the time of our earliest recorded “readers response” (180 CE or so?)—it is a “general belief” that Luke was the author of the book and that he was an eyewitness to the life of Paul.

Soon thereafter Clement of Alexandria dubs Luke the author of Acts (*Strom*. 5.12). Some few years later, Tertullian’s views are interesting and worth noting: he downplays the importance of Luke as a person only because he needs to do so when attacking Marcion’s use of Luke’s Gospel, and only that Gospel:

> Now Luke was not an apostle but an apostolic man, not a master but a disciple, in any case less than his master, and assuredly even more of lesser account as being the follower of a later apostle, Paul, to be sure: so that even if Marcion had introduced his gospel under the name of Paul in person, that one single document would not be adequate for our faith, if destitute of the support of his predecessors. (*Adv. Marc*. 4.2.2)[104]

And so Tertullian grudgingly concedes that the author of Luke followed Paul—obviously because he cannot deny it, since that was the established tradition already.

So too in the so-called anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke (which has nothing obviously anti-Marcionite about it): “Luke was a Syrian of Antioch, by profession a physician, the disciple of the apostles, and later a follower of Paul until his martyrdom.… Later the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles.”[105] Eusebius too accepted the standard tradition (*H.E*. 3.4.1). Jerome expresses it even more strongly: Luke was Paul’s companion “in all his journeying” (*Vir. ill*. 7).

The tradition—unthinkable without the clues provided by the we-passages—continues down to the present day, not just among lay readers of the Bible but among noted scholars of the New Testament, from across a wide spectrum, including the likes of D. Bock, J. Fitzmyer, J. Jervell, C. K. Barrett, and C.-J. Thornton, just to pick several very different scholars from a host of possibilities.

And so Barrett can declare about the we-passages: “The *prima facie* inference to be drawn from them is that the person who wrote them was present at the events he describes.”[106] And as C.-J. Thornton states, somewhat rhetorically, “The We-passages of Acts do not contain anything that ancient readers would not have considered completely realistic. They could glimpse in them only a report concerning the actual experiences of the author. Had the author not participated in the journeys that are narrated in this we-format, his stories about these would be—from an ancient point of view as well—lies.”[107]

It is possible now to draw some simple but far-reaching conclusions. By the end of the second century, everyone who ventures an opinion concerning the authorship of Acts indicates that it was written by Luke, a companion of Paul, who wrote about things that he himself observed. The “fact” that the author was a companion was shown by the we-passages. Since the author was an eyewitness, he was a reliable source for the accounts he narrated.

Since that is the case, there is absolutely nothing peculiar at all in thinking that the author edited his account precisely in order to achieve that end, that is, that this is the effect that he had in mind. Nothing more was needed—no additional first-person narratives, no further self-identification. All the author had to do in order to authorize his account as based on eyewitness testimony and therefore to make it trustworthy as historically accurate was to provide a few passages written in the first person, passages that are stylistically like all his other passages, and so do not appear to have come to him from a different source.

Objections to the View

It is sometimes argued that if “Luke” had really wanted to convince his readers that he was a companion of Paul and an eyewitness, he would have done much more to make it obvious: name himself in the preface, introduce more first-person narratives, stress that he really was present to see these things happen, and so on.[108] I have already shown why this argument strikes me as unpersuasive. Starting with the first author to comment on the matter, Irenaeus in about 180 CE, and for the next eighteen hundred years, virtually every reader of the narrative of Acts was persuaded that it was written by an eyewitness, a companion of Paul. How could a ploy have been any *more* successful?

Others have argued that we have no analogy for what Luke allegedly did: introduce a first-person narrative without warning to authenticate the account.[109] That view is completely wrong, as we have already begun to see, but it is also

important to recognize that Luke had no analogy for a number of his most important literary decisions. So far as we know, he had no predecessor in writing an account of the early church from a historical perspective, or in providing it with a first-person preface without hinting at his own identity, or in making it part of a two-volume work in which the two volumes are actually different genres of literature. To put it otherwise, Luke wrote a Gospel, which was a kind of religious biography, *and* a general history of the early church, and made them two volumes of the same work. Where is the analogy for that? So why does Luke need analogies for anything that he chose to do? In addition, it needs to be stressed that there are abundant analogies for the insertion of the first person into accounts in order to authorize their accuracy, as we saw above; in many instances, these eyewitness authorities are left anonymous, as they are in Acts, and yet they function to demonstrate the validity of the account.

Finally, it is sometimes argued that Luke was too obscure a figure in the early church for anyone to think of as the potential author of the account, if he were not really the author; anyone wanting fully to authorize the account would have chosen someone more prominent, like Timothy or Silas.[110] Unfortunately, this argument claims far more than we could possibly know. For one thing, when someone insists that Luke is too obscure a figure, we might ask, too obscure for whom? Our data from the first century of the church are frustratingly sparse. We have no way of knowing who was obscure or who was well known in most times and places. How can we possibly know who the local favorites among the early Christian missionaries were? In any event, this objection really has little to do with what the author was trying to achieve, since he never claims to be Luke but simply asserts that he was an occasional companion of Paul on his travels.[111]

The Purposes of the Forgery

We are left with the question of the purpose and function of the book of Acts—and indeed of Luke-Acts as a whole—an issue that luckily I do not need either to address or to resolve here in its broadest terms. There were undoubtedly multiple purposes for a work of this length and scope, and scholars have long debated the issues. More germane to my concerns here are the purpose and function specifically of Acts as a forgery. Here there is less room for dispute. The we-passages show that the author was (allegedly) a companion of Paul and therefore an eyewitness to his ministry. They provide assurance to the reader that the account is true and accurate.

Among other things, this is a “history” that celebrates Paul’s miraculous

conversion by a vision of Jesus himself, as recounted on three occasions in the narrative so as to highlight its importance. The book stresses Paul's divine commission to preach the gospel; it emphasizes his supernatural miracle-working power, his compelling preaching, the divine interventions that allow him to overcome all opposition and personal antagonism. Paul is portrayed as the one figure most responsible for the spread of the gospel "to the ends of the earth" (1:8), eventually in the capital city of Rome itself. Paul is the leading spokesperson in the church, God's chosen one to fulfill his mission on earth. The book in short, is both an encomium on Paul and an apology for his life, ministry, and message, allegedly written by someone who was there to see these things happen. But why would an apology be necessary?

We have already seen, and will see in greater length in the next chapter, that Paul was a controversial figure in the early church. So far as we can tell, he had at least as many enemies as friends. In most of his undisputed letters (Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians) he counters the views of his enemies and attacks their persons. These are enemies from *within* the Christian church, inimical teachers who take opposing points of view, and argue, in the context of their opposition, precisely against Paul, his message, and his authority for preaching it. And these are simply the enemies that we know about (though only allusively), from within his own churches. It is impossible for us to gauge how widely Paul was maligned by those in the churches founded by others, or for what reasons.

Acts answers many of the objections raised against Paul and his gospel message. It is not that the author of the book had access to the Pauline letters and writes a direct response to them; he never mentions Paul even writing letters to his churches, and if he did know Paul's writings, he did not know them well. Otherwise it is hard to explain why, in so many places, he appears to contradict them. The situation instead appears to be this: there were widely known charges leveled against Paul, some of them evidenced in his letters, and the author of Acts writes, in part, to set the record straight.

The Judaizers of Galatians claimed that Paul had no authority for his message and that he had corrupted the teachings of the apostles of Jerusalem, especially the pillars of the church, Peter, James, and John. Acts shows that in fact the authority for Paul's message came directly from the resurrected Jesus himself, and that his views were in complete harmony with the apostles before him, with whom he consulted immediately upon being converted and with whom he agreed on every major (and minor) point about both the gospel message and his mission to proclaim it.

The super-apostles of Corinth attacked Paul for being weak in speech and paltry in person. Acts shows that in fact he was a powerful and effective rhetorician, a great worker of miracles, and empowered by God in all his work. No human force could bring him down and his divinely appointed mission could not fail. If he is stoned in one place, he simply gets up and goes on to evangelize the next.

The opponents who maligned Paul to the Romans maintained that his gospel message discounted the role of Israel in the plan of God, severed God's relationship with the Jews, and led to a lawless and godless lifestyle. Acts shows on the contrary that Paul himself was a good, pious, faithful Jew from beginning to end, never doing anything opposed to the laws of his people, never urging lawless lifestyles, even among the gentiles; and Paul's mission was always "to the Jew first." It was unfaithful Jews who have rejected Paul; Paul never rejected Jews or the Jewish faith. His gospel was the fulfillment of all that is true in Judaism.

As we will see in the next chapter, eventually it was Paul's "lawless" gospel—which for him meant a gospel message that all people are restored to a right relationship with God apart from keeping the Jewish Law—that created the biggest rift between his followers and their Christian opponents, as there were other Christians for centuries to come who insisted that faith in Jesus was necessarily a Jewish faith, and that Paul had corrupted the truth of the message of Jesus. For them, Paul was not a divinely commissioned spokesperson of God; he was, instead, the personal enemy of Peter, James, and other apostles of the church. Acts is an early attempt to rescue Paul from such charges, an account allegedly by a personal companion of Paul meant to set the record straight. Paul was converted directly by Jesus, he was empowered by the Spirit just as was Jesus himself and his disciples after him, he proclaimed the true gospel, and he was God's tool in fulfilling the divine plan—which is why he was both powerful and unstoppable. Most important for the purposes of internecine Christian polemic, Paul never did anything to violate the laws God had given to his people the Jews. Moreover, in all his views—about Jesus, the salvation he brought, the role of the Jewish Law, the standing of the gentiles among the people of God—he saw eye-to-eye with the other apostles, and in particular the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. He and they proclaimed the same message.

Even so, the message that they all proclaim in Acts is not, historically, the message of either the historical Paul or of the historical Peter and James. It is the message of "Luke," a later, anonymous author falsely claiming to have been a one-time companion of Paul.

1. “The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research,” *JBL* 95 (1976): 243–54.

2. M. Eugene Boring, “First Peter in Recent Study,” *WW* 24 (2004): 358.

3. “One might call this an imitation of Paul, without begrudging it the name.” (Imitationem Pauli liceret dicere, sine inuidia nominis.) *Paraphrasis in Epistolam I. Petri*, praef. Abs. 3; quoted in Ferdinand-Rupert Prostmeier, *Handlungsmodelle im ersten Petrusbrief* (Würzburg: Echer Verlag, 1990), p. 31 n. 66.

4. H. H. Cludius, *Uransichten des Christenthums nebst Untersuchungen über einige Bücher des neuen Testaments* (Altona: Hermann Heimart, 1808), pp. 296–302.

5. “First Peter in Recent Study,” p. 359.

6. Claus-Hunno Hunzinger, “Babylon als Deckname für Rom. und die Datierung des 1 Petrusbriefes,” in Henning Graf Reventlow, ed., *Gottes Wort und Gottes Land* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), pp. 67–77.

7. See the discussion of the Sibyllina on pp. 508–19.

8. “Das einhellige jüdische Belegmaterial zwingt zu dem Schluß, daß *die Bezeichnung Roms als Babylon unter dem Eindruck der erneuten Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels zustande gekommen ist*.” P. 76, italics his. Neugebauer and Thiede have called Hunzinger’s view into question; Ferdinand-Rupert Prostmeier shows why their objections are not convincing (*Handlungsmodelle*, pp. 127–28, n. 327).

9. The argument is most recently embraced by Lutz Doering, “Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering: Author Construction and Peter Image in First Peter,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 645–81, who also points out that since the claim to authorship is false, there is no reason to think the book was actually written from Rome, any more than that it had to be written to the churches of Asia Minor. It was instead written by a later Christian who “knows” that Peter was closely associated with the Roman church.

10. William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

11. Meir Bar-Ilan, “Illiteracy in the Land of Israel in the First Centuries CE,” in *Essays in The Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society*, ed. Simcha Fishbane *et al.* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1992), vol. 2, 47.

12. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, p. 250.

13. Ibid. See also her earlier study, Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996). Among the

other significant studies of ancient education in reading and writing, see esp. Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

4. P. 177.

5. P. 175.

6. Meir Bar-Ilan, “Illiteracy,” pp. 46–61; Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

7. See the preceding note.

8. P. 426.

9. P. 91.

0. P. 243.

1. *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1993), p. 19.

2. Mark Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

3. Contrast the bizarre view set forth in the Louw/Nida, *Lexicon* *, 27.23, who reject the definition of “illiterate” for *agrammatos* in Acts 4:13: “this is highly unlikely in view of the almost universal literacy in NT times, and especially as the result of extensive synagogue schools.” An understanding of ancient society and culture would go a long way in correcting this kind of mistake, even in such basic fields as lexicography.

4. James Strange in IDBSup., p. 140. Jonathan Reed estimates six hundred to fifteen hundred inhabitants in the time of Jesus (*Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence*, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000, p. 152). The wildly inaccurate claims of Bellarmino Bagatti (“Caphernaum” *MB* [1983] 9) that Capernaum was a city of two thousand to fifteen thousand inhabitants, “as urbanized and urbane as anywhere else in the empire,” were based, as Jonathan Reed has pointed out, on the erroneous estimates of Eric Meyers and James Strange, *Archaeology, the Rabbis and Early Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981), p. 58 (which Strange later modified as noted above), themselves based on the size of the town as described by Charles Wilson’s report in 1871 [!] that the area of the ruins covered 30 hectares. In fact, the area is no more than 6 hectares, and is not as densely populated as Meyers and Strange originally thought (four hundred to five hundred persons per hectare).

5. Reed, *Archaeology*, p. 159.

6. The indication of Luke 7:1–10 that a centurion, with his century, was stationed in town is completely fictitious. Sometimes it is thought that since Zebedee had

"hired servants" fishing must have been a relatively lucrative profession in Capernaum (Mark 1:16–20). But the reference is thoroughly literary. There is no reason to suspect that Mark ever visited the place on a tour of the holy land to note its affluence. Moreover, these "hired servants" may just as well have been very low-level peasants eking out a hand-to-mouth existence.

7. John H. Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," *ABD* V, 269–78.

8. *1 Peter: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 64.

9. Paul Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), p. 3.

0. Prostmeier, *Handlungsmodelle*, pp. 1–32.

1. I am completely unpersuaded by Karl Matthias Schmidt, *Mahnung und Erinnerung im Maskenspiel: Epistolographie, Rhetorik und Narrativik der pseudepigraphen Petrusbriefe* (Freiburg: Herder, 2003), recapitulated in K. M. Schmidt, "Die Stimme des Apostels erheben: Pragmatische Leistungen der Autorenfiktion in den Petrusbriefen," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 625–44, that 1 Peter was meant to be a "fictional" letter. So far as we know it was never read that way, and there are no clear indications that the author meant for it to be taken that way—one of the major criteria for fictions over forgeries, in Schmidt's own reckoning. Decisive for Schmidt is 1 Peter 5:1, Παῦλος. which he reads as meaning not that Peter saw the passion, but that he had been martyred. And if he was martyred, he must not be writing this letter! But throughout the book of Acts, as we will see, Peter is repeatedly referred to as a διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν to Jesus, while still very much alive.

2. H.-M. Schenk and K. M. Fischer, *Einleitung in die Schriften des NT* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1978), vol. 1. 199–203.

3. *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 14–15.

4. *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Leipzig: Weidmannischen, 1810), pp. 617–18.

5. "Das Verwandtschaftsverhältnis des ersten Petrusbriefs und Epheserbriefs," *ZWT* (1881): 379–80.

6. *The Primitive Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 136–39.

7. See pp. 218–22.

8. Most recently see Lutz Doering, "Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering: Author Construction and Peter Image in First Peter," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 645–81. In other Christian writings from about the same time it is clear that writing "through" someone meant that the person carried the letter. Thus, decisively, Ign. Rom. 10. 1, Phil. 11.2, Smyr

12.1, Polyc-Phil. 14.1, and even Acts 15:22–23—where again Silas/Silvanus is designated as the letter carrier. Did the author of 1 Peter know this tradition of Silas and reemploy it here? Thus Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1897–1904), 1. 459.

9. The claim sometimes made (e.g., Elliott, "Peter, First Epistle of," *ABD* 5. 273) that since the author appeals to Jewish Scripture his readers must have been, or included, Jews overlooks the fact that gentiles in the church also used Scripture and that numerous writings, even in the New Testament, are directed to gentiles but use sophisticated modes of interpreting the "Old" Testament (cf. 1 Corinthians).

0. When Elliott argues in *Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) that the language of "resident alien" is to be taken literally as a description of the recipients, not figuratively in the sense of life in this world, apart from one's heavenly home, he makes some interesting sociohistorical points. But it is hard to believe that the author imagined all of his readers literally to be resident aliens wherever they happened to dwell. Would the letter not be read in churches with a variety of social groups present?

1. John Mark is connected with Peter in Acts 12–13; Silvanus could conceivably be thought of as loosely connected with Peter because of Acts 15. But this is very weak, since there he is connected with all the apostles, including Paul. Moreover, it is important to recall, as will be argued at greater length below, Acts too is invested in making links between Peter and Paul, and does so in no small measure by claiming that they had the same associates.

2. The one exception is the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, which certainly postdates 1 Peter. See further the discussion on pp. 407–12.

3. "Man kann unbedingt behaupten, daß, wenn unserem 'Briefe'… das erste Wort *Petrus* fehlte, niemand auf die Vermutung, er sei von Petrus verfaßt, geraten sein würde." *Einleitung in das NT*, 7th ed. (Tübingen, 1931), pp. 192–93. I find Doering unpersuasive with regard to the point that the author is intent on painting a distinct portrayal of Peter ("Apostle, Co-Elder, and Witness of Suffering"). The allusions to Peter, if they exist at all outside of 1:1, are far too sparse and indeterminate.

4. Specifically, the views of Schwegler are not far off the mark: "[1 Peter is] the attempt of a Pauline author to mediate between the separate directions of Petrine and Pauline writers by putting into the mouth of Peter the witness to the orthodoxy of his fellow apostle Paul, a depiction, colored somewhat in a Petrine fashion, of the Pauline teaching.… We thus must recognize in the undeniably

apologetic tendencies of this letter a historical situation, a historical motive, not from the apostolic, but from the post-apostolic era …” (“[1 Peter ist] der Versuch eines Pauliners, die getrennten Richtungen der Petriner und Pauliner dadurch zu vermitteln, dass dem Petrus ein Rechtgläubigkeitszeugnis für seinen Mitapostel Paulus, eine etwas petrinisch gefärbte Darstellung des paulinischen Lehrbegriffs in den Mund gelegt wird.… Wir haben also in der, nun einmal unleugbaren apologetischen Tendenz unseres Briefes eine historische Situation, ein historisches Motiv nicht der apostolischen, sondern der nachapostolischen Zeit zu erkennen”) *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter* II, 24 (as quoted in Prostmeier, *Handlungsmodellen*, p. 27). The difference from the perspective I map out here will be clear. Unlike Baur, Schwegler, and others of their ilk, I do not propose a master plan that encompasses the entire sweep of early Christian history, including the sense that this entire history was divided between Paulinists and Petrines, the single greatest fault of the Tübingen Schule. On the contrary, I think the early Christian tradition was far more fragmented than the Baur thesis allows.

5. Goppelt, *Commentary*, 28–30; Achtemeier, *1 Peter* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 15–19; Elliott *1 Peter* Anchor Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 20–39. Jens Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus? Studien über das Verhältnis des Ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998).

6. Among older scholars who did not shy away from seeing the Pauline resonances of the book, see V. McNabb, “Date and Influence of the First Epistle of St. Peter,” *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 45 (1935): 596–613; F. W. Lewis, “Note on the Date of the First Epistle of Peter,” *The Expositor* 5, 10 (1899): 319–20; W. Trilling, “Zum Petrusamt in NT,” *ThQ* 151 (1971): 123–26; K. Kertelge, *Gemeinde und Amt im NT* (München: Kösel, 1972), p. 138.

7. William Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989).

8. For this point to stand, it scarcely matters that Paul is not recorded in Acts or the surviving letters as visiting all these provinces. He was known as the missionary to Asia Minor.

9. See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, pp. 233–38.

0. See, e.g., Mitton, “The Relationship Between 1 Peter and Ephesians”; Kazuhioto Shimada, “Is 1 Peter Dependent on Ephesians? A Critique of C. L. Mitton,” *AJBI* 17 (1991): 77–196; and K. Shimada; “Is 1 Peter Dependent on Romans?” *AJBI* 19 (1993): 87–137. These questions go all the way back to 1777 and J. D. Michaelis’s claim that Peter had read Romans; so Herzer, *Petrus oder*

Paulus? p. 5. For a negative judgment, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, pp. 15–19.

1. "… aktualisiert für eine neue Situation paulinisches Erbe—und das im Namen des Petrus!" Schenk and Fischer, p. 202.

2. Lindemann, *Paulus*, p. 258.

3. *1 Peter*, p. 18.

4. As some examples: somewhat oddly, the formulation that Christ "suffered" ὑπὲρ/περὶ ὑμῶν in 2:21; 3:18 never occurs in Paul (although Paul does indicate that Christ "died" for us Rom. 5:8; and for our sins in 1 Cor. 15:3.). In fact, Paul never uses πάσχω in reference to Christ. Christ as an "ἐπίσκοπος" or "ποίμην" 2:25 is never found in Paul; for this author, however, Christ is the chief Shepherd, and the leaders are to shepherd his flock (5:2–4). Possibly most striking, Christians are to continue living life "in the flesh" (4:1–2), a view Paul would have found either puzzling or downright offensive.

5. Wolfgang Trilling, "Zum Petrusamt im Neuen Testament: Traditionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen anhand von Matthäus, 1 Petrus und Johannes," *TQ* 151 (1971): pp. 123, 126.

6. "Situation und Sprache der Minderheit im ersten Petrusbrief," *Kairós* n.f. 19 (1977): 1–13.

7. Brox is precisely wrong when he argues, elsewhere, that it is anachronistic to imagine different forms of Christian faith belonging to one apostle or another (Peter, Paul, etc.) and correspondingly that an apostolic name would be used by ancient Christians to guarantee apostolic content ("Zur pseudepigraphischen Rahmung des ersten Petrusbriefes," *BZ* 19, 1975, 78–96). By no means is this view purely modern, as seen both from the New Testament (cf. "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas," 1 Cor. 1:12; or the conflict in Galatia) and from later writings such as the Pseudo-Clementines, as we will see in the next chapter.

8. See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1. 18–20.

9. Another consideration–which is not exclusive to the one just discussed—involves the question of whether there was something specifically in the teaching of Paul on suffering that had created problems for the apostle that needed to be resolved by "Peter." We know that Paul's views of suffering did indeed create problems, for example, in the Thessalonian church, where he evidently taught that the miseries of this age were soon to end with the return of Jesus on the clouds of heaven. When that did not happen a good deal of anxiety arose in the community, as some of their members died in advance of Jesus' return. Had those who "were asleep" lost their reward? 1 Thessalonians is written, in part, to deal with that problem. As time dragged on, Paul's views may

have continued to cause problems, as the imminent end to this world of hardship never appeared. 1 Peter may have been written, in part, to deal with that ongoing situation, to explain the reasons for suffering and to reassure readers that it is to be expected in this age, in part because Paul's views were being discredited. If so, then this could be Peter sounding like Paul precisely in order to provide Petrine support for a specific Pauline perspective. It is striking that Asia Minor is the region where Peter and Paul's conflict is best reported (Galatians) and where we first learn of Christians "suffering for the name" (Pliny's letter to Trajan).

0. See pp. 226–27.

1. As both Dale Martin and Joel Marcus have pointed out to me, in private communications. After the public confrontation Paul leaves Antioch and never mentions it as part of his mission field again. Moreover, had he won a resounding victory, he surely would have stressed the point with his readers.

2. William Sanger Campbell, *The "We" Passages in the Acts of the Apostles: The Narrator as Narrative Character* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Claus-Jürgen Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen: Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen*, WUNT 56 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); Jürgen Wehnert, *Die Wir-Passagen der Apostelgeschichte: Ein lukanisches Stilmittel aus jüdischer Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

3. Samuel Byrskog, "History or Story in Acts—A Middle Way? The 'We' Passages, Historical Intertexture, and Oral History," in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p. 263.

4. P. 264 Byrskog makes the mistake, however, of assuming that the "we" passages contain information that the author received "from people who had been involved"; p. 266. Unfortunately he provides no argument that the passages come from a source instead of from an authorial decision.

5. The classic study, which is still very much worth reading, is P. Vielhauer, "On the Paulinisms of Acts," in *Studies in Luke Acts*, ed. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1966), pp. 33–50.

6. Among the many, many scholars who have taken some such line since the days of Dibelius, Barrett can be taken as representative: C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ICC, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), p. xxix.

7. Claus-Jürgen Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen*. Thornton firmly differentiates this view from the traditional "itinerary" hypothesis. On Thornton's case against forgery, see further note 107.

8. *Die Wir-Passagen der Apostelgeschichte*.

9. A. J. M. Wedderburn, "The 'We'-Passages in Acts: On the Horns of a Dilemma," *ZNW* 93 (2002): 78–98.

0. Thornton does claim that there are distinct features of the passages—more references to the "hosts" of the apostles and more precise designations of time, for example—but these could just as well be verisimilitudes required by the nature of the material. That is to say, they are standard fare among forged narratives. Stylistically the passages are not different from the rest of the narrative, showing authorial unity.

1. "'We' and 'I' Passages in Luke-Acts," *NTS* 3 (1957): 128–32.

2. Darryl Schmidt, "Syntactical Style in the 'We'-Sections of Acts: How Lukan is it?" *SBLSP* 28 (1989): 300–308.

3. Ample refutations of Wehnert's claims along these lines (involving the first-person intrusions in Ezra and Daniel) can be found in the reviews of Chris Matthews, *JBL* 110 (1991): 355–57; and Gerard Mussies in *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 6 (1993): 70–76.

4. E. Plümacher, "Wirklichkeitserfährung und Geschichtsschreibung bei Lukas: Erwägungen zu den Wir-Stücken der Apostelgeschichte," *ZNW* 68 (1977): 2–22; Vernon K. Robbins, "By Land and by Sea: The We-Passages and Ancient Sea Voyages," *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. C. H. Talbert (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1978), pp. 215–42.

5. "By Land and by Sea," p. 217.

6. See, for example, John Reumann, "The 'Itinerary' as a Form in Classical Literature and the Acts of the Apostles," in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J*, ed. M. P. Horgan and P. J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 335–57; and Susan Marie Praeder, "The Problem of First Person Narration in Acts," *NovT* 29 (1987): 193–218.

7. Reumann, "The 'Itinerary,'" p. 357.

8. Praeder, "The Problem," p. 210.

9. Ibid., p. 212. It might be noted that whereas Praeder has shown the problem of the first-person narratives in Acts, and uncovered the weaknesses of the various solutions, she comes up with no compelling solution of her own.

0. *Histories of Polybius*, XII. 25g–h; translation of W. R. Paton, in LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), vol. 4.

1. It should be noted that Polybius is referring to the need for historians to have the *kinds* of experience necessary for the *kinds* of things they describe (military battles, political intrigues, etc.). But the same applies to the author of Acts: Does he have any personal experience of the missionary field that allows him to talk about it? Even more, does he have the experience of accompanying this

particular missionary in his work?

2. See further pp. 421–25.

3. Translation of Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 371–87.

4. Translation of J. K. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 593–612.

5. Translation of Marvin Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, pp. 487–97.

6. Ibid., pp. 107–32.

7. Ibid., pp. 23–30.

8. Translation Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 31–71.

9. Ibid., pp. 3–23.

0. Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 73–113.

1. See further pp. 493–502.

2. Translation of *ANF*, 1.129–31.

3. Translation of Herbert Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 194–213.

4. Campbell, *The 'We Passages,'* p. 30.

5. Ibid., p. 43. Where I disagree with Campbell is in his claim that the author of Acts—or of any of these other books he deals with—is interested purely in literary, narratological matters, and not with establishing precisely the historicity of his account. The prologue of Luke is clear evidence, in my judgment, that the author's interests are not purely literary.

6. Translation of Marcus Dods in *ANF*, vol. 2.

7. "Das erzählte Subjekt eines Textes … wird phasenweise zum erzählenden Subjekt, nimmt den Platz des Autors ein und verbürgt dadurch dem Leser die unbedingte Zuverlässigkeit der Darstellung.… Wer könnte die eigene Geschichte besser und genauer erzählen als der Betroffene selbst?" Wehnert, *Die Wir-Passagen*, pp. 182–83.

8. "Once More St. Luke's Prologue," in *Essays on the Gospel of Luke and Acts," Neot* 7 (1973): 14.

9. Wedderburn, "The We Passages," p. 85.

00. All possible allusions to Acts from early Christian writings (including those in the NT) up to Irenaeus can be found in C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 1.30–48.

01. Translation in Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *ANF*.

02. On the date of the Muratorian Fragment, see p. 91, n. 70.

03. Translation of Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 305–6.

)4. Translation of Peter Holmes, *ANF*, 3.

)5. For discussion (and this translation) see Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 38–39. Metzger dates this prologue to the end of the fourth century, not to the second.

)6. *Acts of the Apostles*, 2.xxvii.

)7. "Die Wir-Erzählung der Apostelgeschichte enthalten nichts, was antike Leser nicht für völlig realistisch gehalten hätten. Sie konnten darin nur einen Bericht über die wirklichen Erlebnisse des Autors erblicken. Hätte der Autor die in Wir-Form geschilderten Reisen gar nicht mitgemacht, so wären seine Erzählungen darüber—auch nach antiken Verständnis—Lügen." Thornton, p. 141. Thornton places a lot of stock in the testimony of Irenaeus and argues that his testimony must reflect tradition from the early second century. Moreover, if the book of Acts was itself written in the reign of Titus or Domitian, then historical Luke and others like Timothy would have been alive, making it implausible, in his judgment, that someone would have ascribed it to Luke, unless he really wrote it. There is nothing persuasive in this argument. False ascriptions could indeed occur during an author's lifetime (it is not even an *in*scription). We have ample evidence of actual forgeries in the alleged author's lifetime: witness Galen, Martial, and 2 Thessalonians. Moreover, there is no reason to think that the historical Luke would have been physically present in the sundry places where this narrative was circulated, to make certain that no one said it was his. And what evidence, actually, do we have about the historical Luke—for example, the date of his death? None at all.

)8. Thus, among many others, Praeder, "The Problem of First-Person Narrative."

)9. Thus Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen*.

.0. The argument is forcefully advanced in ibid.

.1. Thornton's argument that the author really was a companion of Paul fails to convince, in part because his objections to the notion that the author tried to mislead his readers about his identity fall flat. Among other things, he claims that (1) a pseudonymous book would not be written in the lifetime of the alleged author. Yet we know of flat-out forgeries contemporary with their alleged authors. (2) The author would have claimed to be an eyewitness in the preface of the work. But how do we know what an author would have done? And why should we tell him what he should have done? (3) First-person narratives were not used to establish the credibility of historical accounts. This is just wrong. (4) If he were a fictional author, he would have dedicated it to a better-known person, such as Seneca. Again, we have no reason for thinking that we know what an anonymous author would have done, and he clearly had other compelling reasons for dedicating the book to Theophilus.

CHAPTER TEN

Forgeries in Opposition to Paul and His Message

In the previous chapter I noted that the apostle Paul appears to have had as many enemies as friends. We have seen a good deal of what those who revered Paul had to say about him, both by producing forgeries in his name (as in the Deutero-Pauline epistles) and by pseudonymously supporting him and his message, however it was understood, either subtly (as in 1 Peter) or not so subtly (as in 2 Peter and Acts). In this chapter we turn to Paul's literary opponents, who attacked Paul's person and message in the guise of authorized, usually apostolic, writings. Here again, some of the writings, such as the Epistula Petri, which introduces the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, are transparent in their attack on the unnamed Paul; others are far subtler in their polemic, such as the New Testament book of Jude. And a number fall somewhere along the spectrum between these two.

In all cases it must be remembered that the polemic against Paul may not be opposition to the Paul as he has been reconstructed by modern scholars from the seven undisputed letters (the so-called real Paul). Ancient readers knew nothing about this modern consensus of an authentic Pauline corpus or the views that could result from applying historical-critical methods to it. They interpreted and attacked the Paul that had come down to them in writings (some of them forged) and in the oral tradition—skewed as he and his message may have been in these media.

We begin with the most discussed canonical instance of antiPaulinism, the New Testament letter of James, asking whether it is in fact directed against Paul (real or imagined) and, of particular relevance to our present concerns, whether it can be considered a forgery.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

The letter of James begins simply enough: "James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the dispersion, greetings" (1:1). A number of persons are named James in the New Testament, including the father of Joseph (Jesus' "father," Matt. 1:16), the son of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21 etc.), the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3 etc.), the father of Jude (Luke 6:16), and, most famously, the brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3 etc.). There is a compelling two-

pronged argument that the author of this short letter intends his readers to understand that he is the best known James, Jesus' brother, the head of the church in Jerusalem. On one hand, the author does not further identify himself, to indicate which James he is, in a world where the name was exceedingly common. This must mean that he can assume—at least he thinks he can assume—that his readers will know "which" James he is. That would work if this were a letter written to his own close-knit community, for whom further identification would be unnecessary. But the letter is addressed instead—this is the second prong—to the twelve tribes of the dispersion. That is, it is going everywhere.

There have been protracted debates about the ostensible recipients of the letter. Obviously it is not being sent to the twelve Jewish tribes, since these no longer existed; and there is nothing to suggest that it was being sent to non-Christian Jews around the world, as its interests are Christian (even though Christ himself is mentioned only twice). More plausibly, then, the letter is being addressed to Jewish Christians scattered throughout the empire or, possibly, to Christians in general. Since there is nothing uniquely Jewish about the letter (nothing non-Jewish either), perhaps the final option is the best.

With respect to authorship, in any event, the point is that this is a letter intended to be read far and wide by someone who simply calls himself "James" without indicating which James he was; the recipients would have no way of knowing his identity unless they assume he is "that" James: the most famous one of all, the brother of Jesus in charge of the mother church in Jerusalem. It is worth noting in this connection that this particular James is often named in the New Testament without further qualifier (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 2:12).

There are other forgeries produced in the name of James from the early Christian centuries, including the Protevangelium Jacobi, which I will discuss in a later chapter, and three works discovered at Nag Hammadi: the Apocryphon of James and two separate Apocalypses of James. Later times saw the production of yet other forgeries in his name as well.[1] No one thinks James wrote any of these other works. Why should we think he wrote the one that came to be included in the New Testament? My view is that it, like the others, is forged in his name. One leading reason for thinking so is that like his compatriot Peter, as discussed in the previous chapter, James could almost certainly not write.

The History of the Suspicions

Questions about the authorship of the letter are ancient. As is often noted, the

book is not included among the writings of Scripture listed in the Muratorian Fragment. In this case it is impossible to know, however, whether the author actually rejected the book or simply was not familiar with it. Eusebius, on the other hand, deals with the matter directly, indicating that the letter, which was "the first of the epistles that are called catholic" was (sometimes? often?) regarded as forged (ὡς νοθεύεται) since "many of the ancients do not mention it." He, however, accepts the book as canonical since it was used "in most of the churches."

> Such is the story of James, to whom is attributed the first of the "general" epistles. Admittedly its authenticity is doubted [ἰστέον δὲ ὡς νοθεύεται μέν], since few early writers refer to it, any more than to Jude's.… But the fact remains that these two, like the others, have been regularly used in very many churches. (*H.E.* 2.23.25)

Jerome says something similar: "[James] wrote a single epistle, which is reckoned among the seven Catholic Epistles, and even this is claimed by some to have been published by someone else under his name, and gradually as time went on to have gained authority" (*Vir. ill.* 2).

Generally, of course, the book was accepted as canonical and attributed to James, the brother of Jesus. Even Luther, who denied that the book was "apostolic" because it "did not preach Christ," did not deny that James had written it. The first to question authorship seriously was Wilhelm de Wette in his widely used *Einleitung* of 1826; but it was F. H. Kern who first pushed hard for pseudepigraphic authorship, in 1835.[2]

Arguments for Forgery

There are solid reasons for thinking that whoever wrote this letter, it was not James, the brother of Jesus. The first, as already mentioned, is that James of Nazareth could almost certainly not write.

Whoever produced this letter was a highly literate native speaker of Greek, grounded in Hellenistic modes of discourse and able to use abundant rhetorical devices and flourishes. It is often noted that the book employs sophisticated use of participles, infinitives, and subordinate clauses. Even Luke T. Johnson, a supporter of authenticity, points out that the language consists of "a form of clear and correct *koine* with some ambitions toward rhetorical flourish … comparable

in quality if less complex in texture, to that of Hebrews."[3] Johnson also notes that the author makes vigorous use of rhetorical devices found in many Greco-Roman moral discourses, but associated especially with the diatribe.[4] Matt Jackson-McCabe concurs: not only does the author evidence a "relatively high proficiency in Greek grammar, vocabulary, and style"; he is "more generally at home in literate, Hellenistic culture," using commonplaces of Greco-Roman moralistic literature (horses with bits, ships and rudders, controlling the tongue in order to control the body, etc.).[5]

It seems unlikely that an Aramaic-speaking peasant from rural Galilee wrote this. Here I can simply refer the reader back to the discussion of literacy in antiquity, and in Palestine in particular, in the preceding chapter.[6] What applied to the fisherman Peter applies to the common laborer James as well (an apprentice carpenter? We don't know how he earned a living), or even more so. As far into the backwoods as Capernaum was, the little hamlet of Nazareth was more so; excavations have turned up no public buildings, let alone signs of literacy. Even if James's well-known brother could read—and so was considered highly exceptional by his townsfolk (Luke 4:16; cf. Mark 6:2)—it would have been Hebrew; nothing suggests that Jesus could write; if he could do so it would have been in Hebrew or Aramaic, not Greek. And by all counts he was the star of the family.

This was a part of the world where literacy was likely 1–2 percent or even less. Where would James have learned to write Hebrew? Or to read Greek? To write Greek? To write literary Greek? Greek that shows knowledge of the diatribe? And that uses rhetorical flourishes known from Greco-Roman moralists? All of that would have taken many years of intensive education, and there is precisely zero indication that James, the son of a local τέκτων, would have had the leisure or money for an education as a youth. Moreover, there were no adult education classes to make up the deficit after his brother's death years later. One should not reason that James could have picked up Greek after Jesus' death on some of his travels. If he did learn any Greek, it would have been of a fumbling kind for simple conversation; writing literacy was not (and is not) acquired by sporadic conversations in a second language—especially writing literacy at this level. And James certainly would not have mastered the Scriptures in Greek, as the author of this letter has done (see 2:8–11, 23; 4:6). And so, despite the remarkably sanguine claims of some scholars about the Greek-writing skills of uneducated rural peasants of Nazareth, it is virtually impossible to imagine this book coming from the pen of James.[7] The conclusion of Matthias Konradt is understated at best: "it remains questionable … whether

one might expect the rhetorical and linguistic niveau of James from a Galilean craftsman's son."[8] More apt is the statement of Wilhelm Pratscher: "Even if one assumes a widespread dissemination of Greek in first century C.E. Palestine, one will nevertheless scarcely consider possible the composition of James by the brother of the Lord, especially when one compares it to the markedly simpler Greek of the Diaspora-Jew Paul."[9]

Other arguments support the claim that James the brother of Jesus almost certainly did not write the letter.[10] Of key importance is the fact that precisely what we know about James of Jerusalem otherwise is what we do not find in this letter. The earliest accounts of James—one of them from a contemporary—indicate that he was especially known as an advocate for the view that Jewish followers of Jesus should maintain their Jewish identity by following the Jewish Law. This seems to be the clear indication of Gal. 2:12 in the famous Antioch incident: "Certain men from James" influenced Cephas no longer to eat with the gentiles, out of "fear of those from the circumcision." The most sensible construction of the incident is that these "men" were representatives of James's perspective, that he was a leader of the so-called circumcision party, and that this group of Christians, with him at the head, insisted on the ongoing importance of Jews maintaining their Jewish identity, which meant, in light of concerns stemming from rules of kashrut, not eating with gentiles.

So too, the book of Acts. Despite its concern for the gentile mission and its insistence that gentiles not convert to Judaism to be followers of Jesus, Acts portrays James as a Jew deeply concerned that Jewish followers of Jesus maintain their Jewishness. Nowhere is this more evident than in the incident in Acts 21:18–24, where James, after agreeing with Paul about gentiles, nonetheless wants Paul, as a Jew, to demonstrate to other Jews that he has not at all abandoned his own commitment to keeping the Law. The incident is obviously to be suspected historically, as an invention of "Luke." But even as such, it confirms the traditional view that James, a Jewish follower of Jesus, was known to be intent not to violate anything in the rituals prescribed in the Jewish Law.

So too in the fragmentary report of book 5 of Hegesippus' now lost *Memoirs*, quoted by Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.23), possibly dating to the early second century. Here James is said to have remained a Nazirite his entire life, to have had special access to the Jewish Temple, and to have prayed there so regularly that his knees became as calloused as a camel's. Moreover, according to this account, James's concern was entirely for the Jewish people, many of whom he converted to the consternation of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, leading to his martyrdom by

the sanctuary. Hegesippus indicates that this happened immediately before the siege of Jerusalem; Eusebius claims that it is what led (theologically) to the destruction of Jerusalem.

What all of these early accounts suggest about James of Jerusalem is that he was known to be particularly invested in seeing that Jewish followers of Jesus maintained their distinctiveness, vis-à-vis the rest of the world, by holding fast to their Jewish identity culturally and cultically.

The book of James hints at a James-like audience, as it is addressed to "the twelve tribes." What is striking is that none of the cultural or cultic concerns of James of Jerusalem is in evidence in the book. Just the opposite. The book is thoroughly concerned about the "Law," but not about the aspects of the Law that James himself is reported to have been invested in. Here, in the book of James, the Law more or less involves the love commandment (2:8) and the Decalogue (2:10–12). There is nothing about ritual. Or cult. Or kosher food laws. Or Sabbath or feast days. Or circumcision. Or anything at all involving Jewish ethnic identity. The Law is a moral code given by God, applicable to all people. In other words, just those aspects of Law otherwise attested as of supreme interest to James of Jerusalem are absent here. It cannot be replied that this is to be expected in a letter written principally to gentiles; the address indicates that the intended audience is Jewish (-Christian).

One can go farther and argue that what is emphasized in this letter runs precisely counter to what we would expect from the pen of James, leader of the "circumcision party." As we will explore more fully in a moment, this author is concerned not with the "works of the Law" in the sense used by Paul in opposition to "those of the circumcision"—that is, the aspects of the Law that established Jewish identity in a pagan world. The concern is with "good works," that is, doing good deeds to benefit other people. There is no reason to think that the historical James would have objected to the notion that good deeds were an important aspect of the life of one following Jesus. But it is not the area of Law that he is otherwise identified with. His own interests were the same as Paul's, even if he took a position contrary to the apostle of the gentiles on those issues. He was interested in "works of the Law," not "good deeds."

In this connection it is interesting to notice which sins and failures occupy the author of the letter. They are by and large not explicit violations of the Torah but moral shortcomings such as showing favoritism, not controlling one's speech, and failing to help those in need. So too, what is "true religion" for this author? It has little to do with specific requirements of the Torah per se. It involves "bridling" the tongue and "visiting orphans and widows in their affliction"

(1:26–27). It also involves “keeping unstained from the world,” which would seem to open up the door for a discussion of cultural separatism. But instead of detailing the importance of maintaining Jewish identity in light of “the world’s” staining influence, the author speaks only of upright moral behavior. Again, this is not an “un-Jewish” concern; it simply is not the concern attested otherwise for James of Jerusalem. This author speaks of “fulfilling the entire Law” but says not a word about Sabbath, circumcision, purification laws, kashrut, or festivals.[11]

Further indications that the letter is not written by James are given by the intimations that it was written at a relatively late date within the development of early Christianity, after James had died, presumably sometime in the 60s. For one thing, the debate over whether it was important for Christians to engage in “good works” is itself evidenced in the post-Pauline period. In Paul’s day, and James’s, the pressing issues had to do with the relationship of believers in Jesus to the “works of the Law.” Only later, as we will see more fully below, did that concern migrate into a conflict over the importance, or irrelevance, of doing good deeds for salvation.

Another indication of a late date is the concern over ostentatious wealth in the community. Wealthy people have come into the congregations and caused problems, both by their very presence (the problem of favoritism, 2:1–5) and by their actions (dragging the poor into court, 2:6). That rich members of the community formed a sizable minority is evident from the charge of 5:1–6. And how early in the history of the Christian communities could this have been a problem? Surely not in the first decades. So too we learn that even though the “coming of the Lord is at hand” (5:8–9), people need to exercise the patience of Job in waiting for it. This seems to indicate that a good deal of time has passed in the expectation of the parousia, so much so that people have grown highly impatient and need proverbial patience in order to quell their anxieties. Consonant with these considerations is the fact that “elders” appear to be in charge of the community (5:14), a development that appears closer to what we find, say, in the Pastoral epistles than in the letters of Paul written during James’s lifetime.[12]

These indications of late date (and the Hellenized language) not only show that the letter was not written by James, but also that it was not commissioned by him in his lifetime—a view that is rendered highly improbable on other grounds as well, as discussed earlier when I considered the widespread but faulty view among scholars that early Christian authors employed others to write their works for them.[13] This book, in short, claims to be written by someone who did not write it. It is our earliest extant work produced in the name of James, brother of

Jesus, and head of the church in Jerusalem. But like its later counterparts, it too is forged in his name. Why then was it forged?

James as a Counterforgery

Luke Johnson has made a strong case that there is no hard evidence of real animosity between the historical James and the historical Paul, basing his argument in large measure on Paul's neutral references to James in 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19, 2:9, 2.12; and possibly 1 Cor. 9:5.[14] This reading may falter on the Antioch incident of Gal. 2:11–14, as already mentioned. If "James" is not to be blamed for the highly controversial stance of Cephas—who acted "out of fear for the circumcision party"—why would Paul bother to specify that it was the representatives of James who created the problem in the first place? Paul's stance, in any event, is clear: these "men from James" represented a completely intolerable view that threatened the essence of his gospel message. Would James have agreed? We have no way, ultimately, of knowing. What we do know is that later traditions portrayed James and Paul at loggerheads. This can be seen, for example, in the graphic account of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*, where Paul is said to have tried to murder James for his missionary success among Jews in Jerusalem (a passage we will consider at greater length later in this chapter[15]) and by implication in the Epistula Petri, where James is the recipient (eager and willing, one might infer) of the letter of Peter in which Paul, though not named, is clearly described as "the man who is my enemy." The tradition appears to have lived on in some Christian groups who swore allegiance to Jerusalem and the church started there, ruled by James, such as the Ebionites, who understood Paul as Christian enemy number one.

Despite occasional disclaimers, there should be no doubt that Paul, or at least the tradition associated with Paul, is under attack in the letter attributed to James in the New Testament. Johnson is absolutely right to object that there is more to the book than 2:14–26; but it is also the case that this passage is where the principal polemic lies. Moreover, the themes of these thirteen verses resound throughout the short letter. The book is about nothing if not "doing good works" and so being a "doer of the word" instead of simply a hearer. It is overwhelmingly concerned with followers of Jesus living out their faith. All the paranesis is directed to that end, and the book is almost completely paranesis.

Moreover, Johnson is wrong to argue that "there is absolutely no reason to read this section [i.e., 2:14–26] as particularly responsive to Paul."[16] Much to be preferred, for clear and compelling reasons I will enumerate, is Kari Syreeni:

"Not only does [James] heavily draw on Paul, it goes very decidedly into a debate with well-known Pauline statements. The reluctance of many scholars to see a literary dependence here is stunning."[17] Stunning indeed, but understandable. Who wants two of the leading authorities of early Christianity to stand at loggerheads? But at loggerheads they stand—at least in the opinion of the author of this letter, who put words on the pen of James in order to attack what he understood to be the views of Paul. What I will be arguing—here I stand at some variance with Syreeni—is that even though the author based his argument against Paul on "authentic" Pauline traditions, he read these traditions through the lens provided by later Pauline interpreters, so that what he attacked was not (the "real") Paul but a kind of DeuteroPaul, one evidenced, in fact, in surviving Pauline forgeries. The book of James, in other words, is a counterforgery.

James as Dependent on Paul

The evidence that James depends on Pauline formulations for its polemic is clear and compelling; it hinges on verbatim agreements, conceptual formulations, and polemical constructions that are simply too closely aligned to be discounted.

James 2:21 and Rom. 4:2 (and Gal. 3:7)

> James 2:21: Ἀβραὰμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη.
> Rom. 4:2: εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραὰμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη.

The precise verbal overlap alone would be significant, but it is important as well to recognize that for James, both the concept of justification and the example of Abraham appear completely out of the blue in 2:21. "Being justified" has not been part of the discourse of faith and works until this point: δικαιόω occurs here for the first time in the letter. This shows that James is responding to someone who made justification—and more specifically, Abraham's justification—the key point in a discussion of faith and works. This point is made nowhere in early Christian literature, outside of Paul and James.

Moreover, both James 2:23 and Rom. 4:3 quote Gen. 15:6 in order to establish their (contrary) views about Abraham in relationship to his justification. Again, nowhere else in early Christian (or Jewish) literature is Gen. 15:6 brought to bear on the question of justification, let alone justification by works or by faith.

In addition, it is worth noting that the author of James 2:21 understands that Christian believers are the children of Abraham ("Abraham our father"), the one who was justified "by works." This stands in stark contrast with Gal. 3:7: "those who are from faith, these are the children of Abraham."

James 2:24 and Gal. 2:16 and Rom. 3:28

James 2:24: ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον.

Gal. 2:16: εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Rom. 3:28: λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.

The parallels among the passages, much noted for centuries, are striking still today: all of them contain a verb of knowing, an indefinite "person," the verb "justified" in the passive voice, and the antithetical contrast of works and faith. Nowhere else in all of early Christian literature are these elements combined. Yet the two authors take what appear to be—at least on the surface—opposite sides of the argument, one insisting that a person is justified not by "works" of the Law but by faith, the other that a person is not justified by faith alone but by "works." The passages are far too close to have been accidentally created in such similar yet contrary fashion. And so, as Lindemann, in the company of many others, has noted: "The section James 2:21–24 in any case touches so closely upon Romans 3–4 that it raises suspicions of a literary relationship."[18]

The difficulty with Lindemann's claim, which echoes the views widely held at least since Luther, is that it imagines only two possible alternatives: literary independence (of James and Paul) or literary dependence. As I will argue below, this overlooks other options, especially "secondary orality," where Paul's writings influenced how people, even illiterate followers, may have discussed (and here and there altered) his views. This would be a kind of literary dependence mediated not through manuscripts but through an oral tradition, and would make sense of the fact, noted by many, that technically speaking James does not contradict Paul, since his construal of the key terms of the debate—"faith" and "works"—differs from Paul's. That does not mean there is not dependence. Given all the linguistic and conceptual parallels, some kind of dependence is necessary. But it may mean that James is not simply "misreading" Paul. He may have inherited these Pauline formulations in some way other than a direct literary connection with copies of Romans and Galatians in hand.

Other Indications of Dependence

Before developing that idea, it is important to note several other indications that James is reacting to or otherwise influenced by Pauline formulations, whether he learned of these in writing or by other means. Thus for example, James' reference to νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας (1:25; cf. 2:12) seems to stand in sharp contrast to Paul, for whom the Law is a matter of slavery (Gal. 4:24; 5:1) and brings a curse (Gal. 3:10). In addition, as Popkes has pointed out, the only places in early Christian writings where the love command of Lev. 19:18 is portrayed as the crown of the Law, but not used as part of the "two greatest commandments," are James 2:8–11, Rom. 13:8–10, and Gal. 5:14. Popkes convincingly argues for other connections with Paul,[19] leading him to conclude: "James does not treat an isolated theological motive (in 2:14–16) but writes from the background of the development of (Pauline) missionary churches. It is even possible that he may have gained access to several Pauline key texts, albeit probably not directly but mediated through oral or written communication."[20] Note the final phrase.

Understanding the polemic of James requires one to place him in relation to the tradition he is opposing. That is the problem with the position taken by scholars such as N. W. Niebuhr, who argues that one should read James on "its own terms" without importing a knowledge of Paul. Margaret Mitchell's response is apt: in order to read James on its own terms, one *must* read it in light of Paul, "if Paul was one of those terms!"[21]

James as Independent of Paul

Even though James has picked up phrasing, concepts, contrasts, and Scriptural proofs from Paul, his actual position, as often noted, may not be contradictory to Paul's. True, he certainly sounds contrary to Paul. For James a person is justified by works, not by faith alone; for Paul a person is justified by faith, not by doing the works of the Law. The problem is that Paul and James appear to mean different things by both "faith" and "works."

I do not need to provide a lengthy disquisition on Paul's use of the two words. Faith, for Paul, refers to a trusting relationship with God through Christ, or a trust in Christ's death for justification. It is a relational term. But not for James. When James speaks of "faith" he refers to an intellectual acknowledgment of theological claims: "You believe that God is one? You do well. Even the demons believe, and they shudder" (2:19). For James, the intellectual assent to what we

might call propositional truths cannot put a person into a right standing before God. One needs to do "works."

But what he means by "works" also differs from Paul. Paul's "works of the Law" are the demands that the Law makes on Jews qua Jews. In Paul's view, justification does not come by keeping these demands. If it did, then there would have been no reason for Christ to die. This does not mean, of course, that Paul thought that "doing good deeds" was unrelated to a right standing before God. Much of his surviving correspondence, after all, involves urgent paranesis. Believers are still to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). But there is nonetheless an important terminological difference from James. For James, "works" are not the demands of the Law placed on Jews. They are good deeds. One needs to do good deeds in order to be justified. And so, the terse summary of Pratscher: "Indeed, Paul in no way represents the understanding of faith that James attacks."[22] For Paul, too, there is no such thing as ("true") faith without obedience (Rom. 1:5) or active love (Gal. 5:6).

One can well argue—and for centuries, competent scholars have done so, with some vehemence—whether the real, historical Paul would have disagreed with the views set forth by the author of James. My guess is that the answer is yes, since for Paul justification does not come by doing good deeds (either instead of or in addition to faith) but by faith in Christ. But the question is of no moment for my present discussion. One might also ask whether the author of James would have disagreed with the conception of justification put forth by the real, historical Paul. My guess here is that the answer is no, once the terms of the debate were clearly laid out. But again, it is beside the point for the present discussion. The point here is that the author of James is clearly dependent on Pauline formulations for his contrasting views, whether he understood Paul rightly or not, and yet he attacks these formulations in terms that are not actually commensurate with Paul's conception of them. Why is that?

One obvious solution, and the one most frequently suggested, is that James simply misread Paul. This is always a possibility, but another one presents itself as well. What is most interesting is that the Pauline notion that "works of the Law" cannot justify was eventually transformed precisely in the Pauline tradition itself into a teaching about "good deeds." We have seen this already in both Eph. 2:1–10 and Tit. 3:5–8. In these instances, later Paulinists took Paul's teaching about the Jewish Law, and either unwittingly or knowingly altered it—or at least extended it—into a teaching about engaging in meritorious action. For the forger of Ephesians, for example; it is not doing good deeds that brings salvation; it is grace alone (2:1–10).

James is not attacking the position of Paul himself, as scholars have reconstructed him today on the basis of the undisputed letters.[23] But he does seem to be attacking a position that could be read out of the Deutero-Pauline epistles. Or to put it differently, the author of James is reading Paul—either the Pauline letters themselves (Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:28, 4:2), or Pauline traditions circulating orally, based on those letters—through the lens provided by later Paulinists, as evidenced in the Deutero-Pauline letters. If he actually had access to literary forms of the later Pauline tradition, for example, the letter of Ephesians itself, then his writing is not just a forgery. It is a counterforgery.

Why James?

Why then did this counterforger choose the name James for his attack on a later Pauline position on faith and works? Dibelius saw the choice of the pseudonym as ideologically innocent.[24] Unlike the Deutero-Pauline letters, which invest considerable effort in convincing their readers that it is indeed Paul who is writing, this author simply states his name in 1:1 and provides no attempt at verisimilitude. Since James of Jerusalem was known for his "righteous" living, and since this book wants to stress the importance of living out one's faith, the connection was obvious. This view, however, overlooks the early traditions of conflicts between the historical James and the historical Paul. It can scarcely be an accident that this anti-Pauline letter is put on the pen of one of his best known early opponents.

Other more recent authors have gone too far in other directions. Most recently David Nienhuis, for example, advances the creative argument that the author of the book of James was the same person who compiled the seven-letter corpus of the Catholic epistles in order to complement the seven-letter canon of Pauline writings then in circulation, these others produced by the "pillars" of the Jerusalem church.[25] This happened, according to Nienhuis, at the end of the second century, as there is no knowledge of the book of James before Origen. The author in particular was interested in countering the growing influence of Marcionism on the church, and its rabid Paulinism. There are enormous problems with this reconstruction. Irenaeus already shows evidence of knowing the book of James, for example,[26] and little in the writing could be seen as directed against distinctively Marcionite teachings.[27] On the contrary, the views the book counters are easily situated in the post-Pauline situation of the church at the end of the first century. Of more importance for the present discussion, Jude was not one of the "pillars" of the Jerusalem church. The collection could

scarcely have been made in order to have writings of the “pillars” set in opposition to Paul. As a corollary, the author of the present epistle did not choose the name James for that reason.

At the end of the day, the simplest explanation of the authorial claim is probably the best. James was considered an impeccable authority in the early church as the “brother of the Lord” and the leader of the church in Jerusalem. Moreover, he was known to be an opponent of Paul, whether or not the tradition is rooted in a historical conflict. And so, an author who wanted to attack a “Pauline” position—possibly not knowing that it was not Paul’s own, but a position that had later developed within some Pauline communities—chose his pseudonym wisely. In the letter of James we have a forger attacking a DeuteroPaul for views that Paul himself, so far as we know, never held. In doing so it stands in sharp contrast with pro-Pauline works that we have already considered. These include such works as the book of Acts, which shows Paul and James completely on the same page—theologically, practically, and every other way—and, interestingly, the book of 1 Peter, with which, as M. Konradt in particular has shown, the book of James has a number of striking similarities, even though their stand on Paul was precisely at odds.[28]

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

Jude is the shortest forgery of the New Testament, and like many of the others, it is filled with invective against its opponents, even if scholars have found it difficult to discern what, exactly, these enemies of truth were thought to have proclaimed.

Jude the Brother of James

An initial question to be addressed concerns the book’s authorial claim. There are a number of persons named Jude/Judas in the New Testament : Judas Iscariot (Mark 3:19 and parallels; twenty-two occurrences altogether), Judas the son of James (the apostle, Luke 6:16), who may also be Judas “not Iscariot” of John 14:22, Judas the Galilean in Acts 5:37, Judas who owns a house in Acts 9:11, Judas who is called Barsabbas in Acts 15:22. There are solid reasons for thinking that the author of this letter is claiming to be one specific and arguably the best-known Jude of the early church, the brother of Jesus mentioned in Mark 6:3 (along with James, Joses, and Simon). The author identifies himself as the “brother of James” in v. 1, and Mark 6:3 provides us with the only James-Jude brother relationship in the New Testament. Moreover, one would normally

identify oneself in relationship to one's father, not one's brother. The brother in this case must be an unusually well-known person to serve as an identity marker for the author—in this case, a well-known Christian. By far the best known James of the early church, of course, was James the brother of Jesus, head of the church in Jerusalem. The author of this short text, therefore, is almost certainly claiming to be a brother of both James and Jesus (cf. Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:55).

In a moment we will see why the author may have wanted to identify himself in relation to James rather than Jesus. Some scholars have objected that Jude was too obscure a name for an author to choose as a pseudonym.[29] The objection has more rhetorical than substantive force, however. On one hand, how many "nonobscure" figures were there to choose from in the early church? The objection seems to assume that everyone writing pseudepigraphically would choose the names Peter or Paul. On the other hand, and more pressing still, how could Jude be thought of as obscure (leaving Hardy out of the equation)? He was widely known as extraordinarily well connected: his one brother was "the" leader of the earliest Christian community; his other brother was the Savior of the World. Not bad credentials for an early Christian author.

More than that, as J. Frey and others have shown, the author is claiming not just to be a brother of James (and thus a brother of Jesus) but also to be closely connected to the letter written by this brother, the New Testament book of James. The connection to this earlier letter is suggested already by the author's use of the same identifying formula, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος.. Moreover, J. Daryl Charles has noted the inordinately large number of verbal parallels between the two books: 93 cases of verbal agreement out of 227 different words used, 27 of these terms occurring two or more times in both letters: "Astonishingly, *each* of the twenty-five verses of Jude averages approximately four words found in the epistle of James—an extraordinary rate of verbal correspondence." His conclusion: "Aside from Jude–2 Peter and Colossians-Ephesians comparisons, the verbal correspondence in James and Jude, considering the brevity of the latter, is unmatched anywhere else in the New Testament."[30] The writer of the letter of Jude, then, is claiming a derived authority; as Vögtle has put it, Jude's reference to his literary predecessor gives him a status as "einen zweiten Jakobus."[31]

Jude as a Forgery

Jude was rejected by some proto-orthodox and orthodox writers. Eusebius indicates that like the book of James, it was thought by some to be forged (ἰστέον

δὲ ὡς νοθεύεται μέν), although it was publically read in many churches and thus, possibly, canonical:

> Such is the story of James, to whom is attributed the first of the "general" epistles. Admittedly its authenticity is doubted [ἰστέον δὲ ὡς νοθεύεται μέν], since few early writers refer to it, any more than to Jude's, which is also one of the seven called general (λεγομένων καθολικῶν). But the fact remains that these two, like the others, have been regularly used in very many churches. (*H.E.* 2.23.25)

Jerome voiced a more specific doubt about the book: since it quotes from 1 Enoch, it was regarded by many as non-Scriptural and rejected:

> Jude the brother of James, left a short epistle which is reckoned among the seven catholic epistles, and because in it he quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch it is rejected by many (a plerisque reicitur). Nevertheless by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures. (*Vir. ill*. 4)

Modern times have seen a healthy split among scholars who see the book as authentically written by the brother of Jesus and of James, and those who consider it forged.[32] Numerous factors give the palm to the latter group. For one thing, the book gives every indication of being produced relatively late in the first century, after the "age of the apostles." The apostles themselves are referred to as living in the past, and as predicting the "last time" when the author is now living—differentiated from the time of the apostles themselves (vv. 17–18). The author speaks of "the faith" as the content of the body of knowledge that makes up the Christian religion, a usage found in the Pastorals but not in earlier Christian writings such as those of Paul, despite occasional scholarly claims to the contrary.[33] That this "faith" was "delivered once and for all to the saints" assumes an event that transpired in the now distant past.

More important for our purpose here, there are highly convincing reasons for thinking that whoever wrote this letter, it was not Jude, the Aramaic-speaking peasant from Nazareth.[34] Here again, as with the book of James, we need to deal with the problem of language. This author too is not just writing-literate; he writes very good Greek, not the sort of skill one can acquire simply by spending time on the mission field without years of serious literary training.[35] As R.

Bauckham points out, the book employs “wide and effectively used vocabulary”; some of its terminology is “rather specialized” (σπιλάς, φθινοπωρινός, πλανήτης); other words are relatively rare (ἀποδιορίζέιν, ἐπαφρίζέιν). The author has “command of good Greek idiom,” his “sentence construction is handled with considerable rhetorical effect.” Bauckham goes on to speak of the author’s “almost poetic economy of words, scriptural allusions, catchword connections, and the use of climax.”[36] In the fullest study of Jude’s style, J. Daryl Charles speaks of the author’s “elevated use … of rhetorical invention, composition, and style,” and mentions, in particular, his use of “parallelism, antithesis, figures of speech, repetition, ornamentation, vivid symbolism, word-and sound-play.”[37]

In addition, it should be pointed out that the author is not only flawlessly fluent in Greek composition, but he also knows the Hebrew Bible, evidently in Hebrew.[38] Moreover, he knows the book of 1 Enoch, arguably in Aramaic.[39] As a result, we have here an author who is not merely literate—able to read, apparently effortlessly—in three languages, but fully writing-literate in one of them (a second language for him, if he were a native of rural Palestine). How could this be true of Jesus’ brother, an Aramaic-speaking peasant from a small hamlet of Galilee, who no doubt like his father was a common laborer?[40]

As a side note, I might mention that we have some record about Jude’s family from later times, which gives us no indication that it came from the upper classes that could afford the time and money for education. Hegesippus tells the story of Jude’s grandsons brought before the emperor Domitian, when he learned they were from the line of David and so, possibly, instigators of a kind of messianic uprising against the state. These men convinced Domitian that they were poor farmers who could barely eke out an existence working full-time on the land, showing him their calloused hands as proof. And so he set them free (Eusebius *H.E.* 3.19–20). There can be little doubt that the report is apocryphal. It defies belief that the Roman emperor himself would cross-examine Jewish peasants from Palestine, let alone that he would do so out of fear that their insurgency might cripple his empire. But the story does show how Jude’s family was remembered in the early church: not as aristocratic elites with wealth and leisure to receive the refined benefits of higher education. Just the contrary, they continued to be known as lower-class peasants who engaged in full-time manual labor simply to survive. Nothing suggests that their progenitor, Jude, was any different.

In short, the book of Jude appears to have been written relatively late in the first century, after the age of the apostles, by a highly educated Greek-speaking (and -writing) Christian who was able to negotiate the complexities of both the

Hebrew Bible and surviving Aramaic literature. Whoever this elite, well-trained figure was, he was not the Aramaic-speaking peasant of Nazareth, the brother of Jesus and James.

The Nature of the Polemic

The epistle of Jude presents an outpouring of invective against a group of persons who have allegedly infiltrated the Christian community, wreaking havoc in their wake. In the influential view of Frederik Wisse, the "heresy" promoted by these persons has no real content.[41] These persons are accused of being wildly licentious (v. 4) and of denying "our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 4). This shows that the predictions of the apostles have come to pass, that the readers are indeed living "in the last time" (v. 17). Wisse appears to be absolutely right that the author of this short piece of polemic must grossly exaggerate the character of his opponents: "It is beyond belief that persons of this description could have been accepted and tolerated in a Christian congregation, much less have slipped in unnoticed."[42] But he probably goes too far in claiming that the author would have not written pseudonymously to an unspecified group of readers if he had wanted to address a specific problem. Pseudepigraphic polemics regularly attack specific problems and deal with concrete issues. Moreover, we can indeed say some things more concretely about the views of these enemies to the true "faith once delivered to the saints" (v. 3).

For one thing, the opponents are portrayed as having come from the outside and having infiltrated the community (v. 4). It is not at all clear that we should accept their outsider status: this part of the polemic could easily have arisen from the concern not to concede that "the truth" was perverted from the inside. But that the opponents were *eventually* inside the community should at least be clear. Otherwise it is impossible to explain the author's vexation.

Modern interpreters have taken the portrayal of the enemies as licentious reprobates to two equally unlikely extremes. Some, such as Gerhard Sellin, have discounted all of the language of moral iniquity and claimed that modern interpreters have read licentiousness into the book instead of out of it.[43] Even though other parts of Sellin's understanding of the book are attractive, it is difficult to concede to him this particular point. Whatever else the author wanted to say about his opponents, charges of antinomian behavior figure prominently (thus: ἀσέλγεια v. 4, ἐκπορνεύσασαι v. 7 [spoken about Sodom and Gomorrah, but the opponents behave "in a similar way"];σάρκα . . . μιαίνουσιν, v. 8; συνευωχούμενοι, v. 12; αἰσχύνας, v. 13; κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας ἑαυτῶν πορευόμενοι, v. 16;

κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν, v. 18). The other extreme is represented by Bauckham, who claims that the author is concerned with antinomianism and nothing but antinomianism.[44] This view overlooks other charges leveled against the opponents, or at least it has to force them into an uncomfortable antinomian mold, as they are said to "deny … Christ" (v. 4); to "revile glorious ones" (v. 8); to follow the error of Balaam and the rebellion of Korah (v. 11); and to be grumblers, boasters, and flatterers (v. 16)—none of which necessarily involves licentious lifestyles.

Something more specific about the enemies' alleged antinomian behavior is suggested by v. 4: they "alter the grace of our God into licentiousness" (τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν χάριτα μετατιθέντες εἰς ἀσέλγειαν). In other words, they take the teaching of χάρις too far, thinking that the Christian religion is all about grace, not about how one lives. For them—in the judgment of their opponent, the author—antinomian living is a consequence of the teaching of grace. In an earlier period, Paul himself, an advocate of χάρις, was accused of holding some such view: "Just as some claim that we say, 'let us do evil so that good might come'" (Rom. 3:8). Paul naturally denies the charge, but one can see how it might be taken, by others, to be the logical conclusion of his teaching of divine grace and the justifying effect of faith apart from "works of the Law." But the charge makes even better sense against later forms of Paulinism, such as that represented in the book of Ephesians, a forgery that states quite explicitly that one is saved not by doing good deeds but solely by the grace (χάρις) of God: "For you have been saved by grace, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not from works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8–9).

The author of Ephesians takes Paul's teaching on faith and grace a step beyond Paul, in indicating that good behavior can have no bearing on "being saved." The opponents of Jude allegedly take the matter a step further still: antinomian activity demonstrates the full grace of God, which alone brings salvation. Or at least the author of Jude *portrays* his opponents as making that argument. Whether they did so or not is anyone's guess; but it does give one pause that Paul himself was falsely accused of something similar already decades earlier.[45] In any event, this charge against what appears to be a (post-)Pauline position can help explain why the author claims to be Jude, the brother of James. As Sellin recognized, this author is uniting with the epistle of James in opposing a view of grace that renders the moral life of the Christian immaterial.[46]

But there is even more in the polemic of Jude to suggest that the opponents

are being constructed as representing a form of Pauline Christianity. One of the specific charges leveled against them is that they denigrate and revile angels. Bauckham, who sees the problem with the opponents purely in antinomian terms, has difficulty explaining this charge. In his view, these angels are possibly the ones who delivered the Law; they are reviled by those who violate it—an implausible view, since nothing is said about the "glorious ones" being those who delivered the commandments to Moses. A better alternative has been proposed by Sellin and, to some extent dependent on him, Frey.[47] The denigration of angelic beings was part of the Pauline tradition.

Before turning to Paul, consider the comments of Jude. According to v. 8, the opponents not only "defile the flesh," they also "reject authority" and "revile glorious ones." In v. 10 again they are said to "revile what they do not understand." They are unlike the archangel Michael, who did not dare to revile the Devil (v. 9). Moreover, the one explicit quotation of the short epistle is of 1 Enoch in vv. 14–15, a passage that also relates to angels, as does the allusion to the Book of the Watchers (presumably) in v. 6.[48] As Frey notes, the "decisive point for the author lies in his angelology."[49]

Where in the Christian tradition are angels devalued? As Frey points out, we already see a movement in this direction, possibly, in the undisputed Paul, where the phenomenon of glossolalia already places believers on the same level as angels (1 Cor. 13:1). Moreover, for Paul, rulers, powers, and authorities are considered inferior forces, subject to Christ in the end (1 Cor. 15:24). And believers are said to be the future judges of angels (1 Cor. 6:3). In Galatians Paul devalues the Law precisely because it was given through angels (Gal. 3:19).

This depotentizing of angels is carried out yet further in the Deutero-Pauline epistles. Angelic powers are part of the creation overcome by Christ (Col. 1:16; 2:10; Eph. 1:21); they are stripped through Christ's triumph over the powers (Col. 2:15), and for that reason they are decidedly not to be worshiped (Col. 2:18). This final verse is especially key for Sellin and Frey. As Frey states: "It is thus certainly imaginable that an attitude like the one mentioned by the author of Colossians appeared to the author of Jude as a denial of the cosmological and eschatological significance of the angels and the order represented by them."[50] Or as Sellin earlier put it:

> Connections … may well exist between the author of Colossians, who polemicizes against angel-worshippers, and the heretics of the Epistle of Jude. After all, it becomes apparent in Col 2:18 that the tenets of the Law and the service of angels, on one hand, and antinomianism and the

> despising of angels, on the other hand, belong together. The heretics of the Epistle of Jude thus appear to me to be standing in a Pauline tradition whose oldest witness is Colossians.[51]

Despite the attractiveness of this position, it should be pointed out that the polemic of Jude appears to be directed at Pauline Christians who have taken their views (whether actually or simply in the author's fertile imagination) yet a step farther than that evidenced in the Deutero-Pauline epistles of Ephesians and Colossians. Just as the opponents do not merely insist that χάρις apart from good works brings salvation (as in Ephesians), but go much farther (allegedly) in promoting an actual antinomian lifestyle, so too the opponents do not merely discourage the worship of angels (as in the DeuteroPaulines), but they (allegedly) actively denigrate them. Thus even though the opponents do not take a position attested in any of the canonical Pauline writings, they stand in a clear Pauline trajectory.

It is impossible to say whether any such opponents really existed. But they certainly existed in the imagination of the author, whose attacks appear to be directed against Pauline Christians.[52] It is this opposition to Paul—at least as conceived in the mind of the author—that explains, then, the choice of the pseudonym "Jude." P. Davids is off-base to argue that an author wanting to choose a false name would not have chosen an "obscure" figure such as Jude, as we saw out the outset. Indeed, this author chose to polemicize against the Pauline tradition in a way that makes patent sense. By choosing the name Jude he has established his credentials as one closely related to James of Jerusalem, and he, in fact, stands in clear lines of continuity with the letter allegedly written by his more famous brother. His grounds of attack are different, but the target is the same: Paulinists whose radical views had led to the rejection of all authority, angelic and moral.[53]

THE EPISTULA PETRI

Although the Epistula Petri is one of the "introductory writings" of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, it is not altogether clear that it was composed to serve that function. The "Preachings" of Peter at issue in the letter are not the *Homilies* of Clement themselves. Indeed, they appear to be a collection of writings that were earlier sent by Peter to "James, the lord and bishop of the holy church" (1:1),[54] whether this was an actual collection, or more likely, a fiction alluded to simply to provide the occasion of the letter. Moreover, Clement is not mentioned in the

letter. For these reasons, despite common scholarly opinion, the letter may have been composed independently and was only added to the *Homilies* secondarily.[55]

The purpose of the letter is to instruct James to follow the example set by Moses among "those who belong to his people" for the transmission of sacred literature. Just as Moses passed his books only to specially selected individuals who could be trusted, so too the books of Peter's preaching are not to be given to "any one of the gentiles," nor to any "of our own tribe" before they have gone through a period of trial to demonstrate that they are trustworthy. The reason for Peter's concern is clear: there have been some gentiles "who have rejected my lawful preaching [that is preaching about and in accordance with the Law], and have preferred a lawless and absurd doctrine of the man who is my enemy" (2.3). These gentile enemies have tried to "distort my words by interpretations of many sorts as if I taught the dissolution of the Law" (2.4). But for Peter this is a heinous charge, for he would never oppose "the Law of God which was made known by Moses" and which was borne witness to by Jesus, who indicated that none of the Law will ever pass away while there is a heaven and earth (quoting Matt. 5:18). Peter, in other words, is in full support of the Mosaic Law, which continues in full force; to think otherwise is to oppose God, Moses, and Jesus (2.5). It is only "the man who is my enemy," and the gentiles he has influenced, who have twisted Peter's words to make him appear to say otherwise.

No one thinks that the actual author of this short letter was Peter himself. But it was certainly someone who wanted his readers to think he was Peter. And the identity of his opponent is no mystery: it is Paul ("the man who is my enemy") and his followers ("the gentiles").

The idea that care was needed in passing along important texts was a commonplace in the ancient world, where books copied by hand were open not only to misinterpretation but also to physical alteration. Comparable concerns can be found, for example, in Galen's *De libris propriis* 11: "I ordered that these notes should be shared only with those who would read the books with a teacher." So too in the Apocryphon of James from Nag Hammadi, a writing also connected with Peter:

> You have asked me to send you a secret book revealed to me and Peter by the master, and I could not turn you down, nor could I speak to you, so [I have written] it in Hebrew and have sent it to you, and to you alone. But since you are a minister of the salvation of the saints, do your best to be careful not to communicate to many people this book that the Savior did not want to communicate even to all of us, his twelve

disciples. (1.8ff.)[56]

That Paul is the unnamed "man who is my enemy" is not open to much doubt.[57] This is someone who has an enormous effect on "the gentiles" and who preaches a "lawless gospel." This latter phrase is shorthand for a gospel message that proclaims a person can be made right with God without keeping the Jewish Law, an apt description of Paul's message in a book such as Galatians, sent to gentiles and insisting on justification apart from "works of the Law." It is striking that the author of the Epistula Petri is particularly concerned that this "enemy" proclaims that Peter himself supports his "lawless gospel." That is precisely Paul's claim in Galatians, as he indicates that the pillars of the Jerusalem church, James, Cephas, and John, "added nothing to me" and in fact "gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship" (Gal. 2:6, 9). According to Paul, Peter agreed with his law-free gospel. However one construes the precise nuances of the matter—a much-disputed topic—the Antioch incident of Gal. 2:11–14, in Paul's eyes, was a matter of Peter's hypocrisy. Whereas Peter had formerly, in Jerusalem, agreed with Paul's gentile gospel, and acted out this agreement in having table fellowship with gentiles (who obviously were not keeping kosher), he changed his mind and his behavior so as not to give offense, once members of "the circumcision" came to town as representatives of James. In Paul's eyes, Peter's offense was that he began to act as if he did not agree with the law-free gospel after he had already, overtly, agreed.

The Epistula Petri may well be referring to the account of the Antioch incident in Galatians when it charges its enemies with maintaining that Peter agreed with "the dissolution of the Law" but that he "did not express it openly"—in other words, that he held to a Pauline view, but did not publicly say so. This is the charge that Paul levels against Peter in the passage of Galatians, before stating baldly: "knowing that a person is not justified by works of the Law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law, because from the works of the Law will no one be justified" (2:16). This, then, is the "lawless" gospel that Peter opposes in the Epistula Petri, and that his enemies falsely accuse him of affirming.

It is striking that other forgeries of early Christianity do indeed claim that Peter agreed with Paul in his law-free gospel message. As we have seen, that is one of the overarching themes of the book of Acts, a non-pseudepigraphic forgery allegedly by one of Paul's own companions. In Acts it is not Paul who first learns that the gospel is to come to gentiles apart from the Law, but Peter

(Acts 10). And it is not Paul who first converts gentiles to the law-free faith, but, again, Peter (Acts 10–11). Moreover Peter and James—even more than in Paul's account of Galatians 2—are completely aligned with Paul's law-free gospel in Acts; at the Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15 everyone sees eye-to-eye: the gentiles are not to keep the Law in order to receive salvation through Jesus. This, for Acts, is the explicit message of Peter, the alleged sender of the Epistula Petri (Acts 15:7–11); James, the alleged recipient of the Epistula (Acts 15:13–21); and Paul, the enemy described in the letter (Acts 15:12).[58]

A similar message is presented in the forged 1 Peter, which advocates a Pauline gospel in the name of Peter, and yet more obviously in the forged 2 Peter, where the author not only doth protest too much that he really is Peter, but also claims to be on the same theological page as Paul, whose writings he classifies among "the Scriptures" (2 Pet. 3:16). There are in fact interesting and ironic similarities between 2 Peter and the Epistula Petri. In the latter "Peter" expresses his chagrin over those who have twisted his teachings by false interpretation, making him sound as if he supports the lawless gospel message of his enemy (Paul). 2 Peter, on the other hand, complains of alleged followers of Paul who twist Paul's words away from a Petrine view. And so, in one book it is the writings of Peter that are twisted, in the other it is the writings of Paul. In both instances the twisting involves false and, one might say, unauthorized interpretations. But in the case of 2 Peter, the false interpretations portray Peter and Paul as standing at odds with one another; in the case of the Epistula Petri they portray them as standing in unity.

It is not difficult to imagine that the Epistula Petri arose because of other forgeries, some of them in the name of Peter, that maintained that Peter and Paul agreed on the Pauline understanding of a so-called law-free gospel. If so, then it would be another instance of counterforgery. Its subsequent attachment to the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* makes sense, not only because it celebrates the importance of Peter, but also because it does so at the expense of Paul, a theme that recurs at other places in the *Homilies*, as we will see below.

It is interesting, then, to trace the history of Peter and Paul through these various writings. The historical Peter himself may well have held to the ongoing importance of the Law, at least for Jews. That would explain his actions in Antioch, as maligned by Paul in Gal. 2:11–14. Again, on the historical level, this may indeed have led to a falling out between the apostle to the circumcised and the apostle to the uncircumcised. Later, forgeries were produced taking a stand on this conflict. In the not-so-subtle account of the non-pseudepigraphic forgery allegedly produced by one of Paul's own companions, the book of Acts, the two

apostles are portrayed as being in complete and perfect harmony. With greater subtlety the same lesson is conveyed in the forged 1 Peter. Later still all subtlety is once again abandoned, when yet a third Paulinist forged the letter of 2 Peter. On the other side of the equation an anti-Paulinist forged the Epistula Petri in order to counter this (false) opinion that the two apostles saw eye-to-eye, since, for this author, the harmony of the two would necessarily mean that Peter ultimately agreed with Paul. But for the Epistula Petri, the two did not agree, because Paul was the enemy. Moreover, in their dispute, Peter was right and Paul was wrong. And what is more, James of Jerusalem agreed with Peter.

THE EPISTULA CLEMENTIS

Another forgery that survives as one of the introductory writings to the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* is the Epistula Clementis. Although not usually recognized as such, the Epistula is a kind of "church order," comprising instructions about different church offices given to Clement, ordained to be the bishop of Rome by the apostle Peter. The key emphasis at the beginning and end of these orders concerns this ordination, as Peter passes along to his unwilling successor the power to bind and to loose. The overarching concern of the book, then, is to show that Clement is the one who carries Peter's authority in the governance of the church. As W. Ullmann puts it, "What we are here confronted with is the perfectly clear and unambiguous institution of an heir by St. Peter.… Clement was elevated onto the throne, the cathedra, of Peter by the apostle himself."[59]

The letter falsely claims to be written by Clement to "James, the lord and bishop of bishops, who governs the holy church of the Hebrews at Jerusalem" (1.1).[60] This address functions to establish the authority of James and, by implication, the importance of a Jewish understanding of the faith: James is both the leader of the "church of the Hebrews" and the "bishop of bishops." More particularly the address stresses the connection of Rome and Jerusalem, the two ultimate seats of power in the early church, whose two leaders are in complete agreement. Of special interest, Clement, bishop of Rome who has all the power of Peter to bind and loose, and so is superior to every convert to the faith, is subordinate not only to Peter but also to James, "who rules … the churches everywhere." This then is a Jewish-Christian forgery meant to promote a kind of Jewish Christianity. Correspondingly, the letter is written in no small measure to oppose Paul and the kind of Christianity he represents.

It is interesting to note, in this connection, the emphasis placed on Peter, often in implicit contrast to Paul. Peter is the "first fruit of our Lord, the first of the

apostles to whom the Father first revealed the Son" (1.3). Here there seems to be a clear contrast with the Paul of the undisputed letters, who gloried in the fact that at his conversion "[God] was pleased to reveal his Son to me" (Gal. 1:16). It was Peter, the Epistula Clementis avers, who was a "table-companion and fellow traveller" with Jesus (1.3). Later in the *Homilies* this long acquaintance with Jesus will be used to set Peter over against Paul, who knew Jesus only from a brief vision (Hom. 17.13–19). Peter was appointed, "as the most capable of all" to "enlighten the darkest part of the world, the West, and was enabled to achieve it" (1.3). For those familiar with other early Christian literature, the contrasting claims of Paul are stark: he himself expressed a wish to preach in Rome (Rom. 1:15) and planned a mission to the far West (Rom. 15:22–29). Moreover, according to the Roman 1 Clem. 5:7, it was precisely Paul who took the gospel to the West.

For the Epistula Clementis it was Peter who proclaimed Christ "to all the world … saving men by his God-willed teaching" (1.5). Later Clement is called "the better first-fruits among the gentiles who are saved through me [Peter]" (3.4). It is not Paul who was the God-appointed missionary to the gentiles. The letter also speaks of "the evil one [who] has begun a war against His bride" (4.2). This may well be a reference to the devil as "the evil one." But it is also important to note that the way the evil one works is principally from inside the community, as Peter explicitly states at the end of the letter:

> If anyone remains a friend to those with whom he (the bishop) is at enmity, and speaks with those with whom he does not consort, he is himself one of those who wish to destroy the Church. For he who is with you in the body, but in his mind is not with you, he is against you, far more dangerous than the enemies who are visible outside, since with seeming friendship he scatters those within. (18.3–4)

Given the celebration of both Peter and James, and the obvious contrast being made between Peter and Paul—not to mention the context of the letter, coming in its transmitted state after the Epistula Petri and before the *Homilies*—it may well be that Paul is the enemy within.

In an even subtler way, this letter may evidence long-standing tensions between Peter and Paul, specifically with regard to the legitimate leadership of the church of Rome. Here it is Peter—emphatically not Paul—who is the chief apostle of the Roman church; he ordains his successor directly by a public ceremony of laying on of hands. Clement is presented as Peter's most important

gentile convert to the faith and follower, who assumes the mantle of leadership only unwillingly.[61]

This view stands in contrast with the position taken by Irenaeus, who indicates that prior to Clement there were two other bishops, Linus and Anecletus, and that Peter and Paul *together* were responsible for the bishopric of Clement.[62] Irenaeus explicitly states that the church in Rome, which was “very great, very ancient, and universally known” was “founded and organized … by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul” (*Adv. Haer*. 3.3.2) Both apostles committed the church into the care of Linus, who was succeeded by Anecletus, and then Clement. Clement himself knew both apostles and had “the preaching of the apostles still echoing in his ears and their tradition before his eyes” (*Adv. Haer*. 3.3.3). Irenaeus’ concern to stress the unity of Peter and Paul in the subsequent Roman leadership is especially clear in the following claim:

> This succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth. (*Adv. Haer*. 3.3.3)

It is worth noting in this connection that Linus and Clement, mentioned by Irenaeus, are both associated in the New Testament with Paul (2 Tim. 4:21; Phil. 4:3), but never with Peter.

How different is the view of the Pseudo-Clementines themselves, and of the writings that now introduce them, including the Epistula Clementis, which presses for the superiority of Peter at the expense of Paul, and stresses that it was he alone who chose his successor to sit on his cathedra.

The orthodox concern for a unified Pauline-Petrine front in the leadership of Rome is found in a different way, later, in Eusebius, who indicates (contra Irenaeus) that Linus was called to be the bishop of the church only after Paul and Peter had been martyred (*H.E*. 3.2). Moreover, for Eusebius, Linus was the first bishop after Peter, and Clement the third (no reference to Anecletus; *H.E*. 3.4). Eusebius does not indicate who ordained Linus or Clement, but he does note that Clement was Paul’s companion and co-worker, with reference, again, to Phil. 4:3.

Yet more interesting, from about the time of the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, the Apostolic Constitutions indicates that the first bishop of Rome was Linus, who was ordained by Paul, and that the second was Clement, ordained by Peter

(7.46). Does this reflect an early conflict found among factions in Rome, where some claimed that Paul was the one responsible for establishing the line of bishops and others claiming that it was Peter? Were there divisions in Rome comparable to what are earlier attested for Corinth ("I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas"; 1 Cor. 1:12)? If so, it is no mystery which side of the debate eventually won out, as the less-than-conciliatory view represented in the forged Epistula Clementis became dominant: Peter founded the church and appointed his own successor, thus beginning the Roman apostolic line traced back to the chief disciple himself.

At every point, there were conciliatory voices, which cannot, however, agree among themselves about how to effect the conciliation. For some, both apostles appointed Linus; for others, Peter appointed Clement, Paul's companion; for others Paul appointed the first successor and Peter the second. Conciliation between the two apostles is found in other literature as well, including the forged pro-Pauline documents we have considered so far and the even more famous letter of 1 Clement, falsely attributed, not by accident, to Clement of Rome, but in fact written by the Roman church precisely to the church of Corinth, earlier divided along apostolic lines (1 Cor. 1:12), in which Peter and Paul are jointly portrayed as the two great apostles of the earlier generation (1 Clement 5).

It would be a mistake, however, to see the Epistula Clementis as being principally concerned with establishing a polemical position against Paul. The vast bulk of the letter is an early church order, with instructions and exhortations to the bishops, presbyters, deacons, and catechists of the church, and an extended analogy of the church as a ship with different crew members sailing over the rough seas of life. Moreover, the letter is set up to be an introduction to the Clementine *Homilies*. But in another sense the "set up" is precisely the point, as the *Homilies* too imagine a real threat from within, associated to some extent, at least with Paul. Here too is a forgery that, in part, attacks Paul's views with the authority of Peter and, by implication, James, as mediated through Clement, bishop of the church of Rome and the one who was ordained to his position through Peter, the one who had been given the power to bind and to loose.

PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE RECOGNITIONS AND HOMILIES

The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* represent two reworkings of an earlier Christian novel that described, principally, the conversion of the Roman Clement to the Christian faith through the ministration of the apostle Peter, and the proclamations and missionary adventures of the two afterward.

The novel itself—the so-called Grundschrift—was probably composed in the early third century; its two surviving, heavily modified, iterations appear to stem from fourth-century Syria.[63] Both the *Recognitions* and *Homilies* are forged in the name of Clement himself; the former begins with the claim "I Clement, who was born in the city of Rome was from my earliest age a lover of chastity" (1.1), and goes from there. The *Homilies* begin similarly.[64]

Until recent years, the overwhelming concern of scholarship on the Pseudo-Clementines involved the vexed question of sources and of sources behind the sources: their extent, literary character, theological views, polemical targets, and dates. Few problems in early Christian studies have proved more intractable and convoluted. Since my interests in the present study are not with hypothetical sources that may have been forged, but with surviving texts, I will not delve into the source questions and the detailed arguments that have generated the *opinio communis* that has more or less emerged here in the twenty-first century, except to say that the Grundschrift is widely thought to have been a Jewish-Christian production that, in part at least, represented a polemic against Marcionite understandings of the faith,[65] and that the source behind *Recognitions* 1.27–71 is widely taken to have been an attempt to rewrite, in some sense, the Christian history presented in the book of Acts, about which I will have more to say later.[66]

More recent scholarship, particularly in the insightful work of Nicole Kelley and Annette Yoshiko Reed, has bypassed the question of sources and approached the Pseudo-Clementines in their final form, asking what they can tell us about the social and theological conflicts within Christianity at the time and place of their production, fourth-century Syria.[67] These sophisticated analyses are relevant to such matters as the production and promotion of (some kind of) "Jewish Christianity" and the subtle polemics against unnamed opponents. For the present, however, I am principally interested in the several passages—incorporated, it appears, from earlier sources—that reflect opposition to Paul. In two of these passages the ostensible target is Simon Magus, Peter's nemesis on the missionary trail throughout the narratives. Scholars have long recognized that in some instances Simon is a cipher for Paul himself. This does not mean that in every episode involving Simon one should think of Paul. Quite the contrary, scholars such as Mark Edwards and, especially, Dominique Côté have shown that Simon is not a simple, coded figure, standing necessarily for Paul, his later follower Marcion, or even Simon Magus himself. He is a composite figure encompassing the bad features of all these persons, and more.[68] It is nonetheless equally clear that in some of the polemic against Simon we are seeing polemic

against Paul.

Recognitions 1.66–71

The one place where Paul is clearly in view and under attack, but not under the cipher of Simon, is in *Recognitions* 1.66–71. This is the concluding episode of the first instruction given to Clement by Peter, and as just noted, is widely taken to have been drawn from an earlier source that comprises 1.27–71, to be discussed as a whole later.[69] The instruction traces the history of God's interaction with humans from the creation of the world down to Clement's own day. In his speech Peter predicts that the Jerusalem Temple would be destroyed because the "time of sacrifices" has "passed away" with the coming of Jesus.[70] The Jewish sacrificial system, established by Moses as a compromising and temporary measure, has now been surpassed. This declaration causes an uproar among the Jewish priests, who are calmed by Gamaliel, called "a chief of the people," even though in fact he is portrayed as a secret Christian. Gamaliel promises that a public debate will be held on the next day to "oppose and clearly confute every error." His Jewish listeners assume that he means to confute the Christians, though in fact, as a secret follower of Jesus himself, he evidently plans to vindicate the Christian cause.

Gamaliel comes the next day to the scene of the debate with James, "the chief of the bishops," who enters into a public discussion with the chief priest Caiaphas. On the basis of arguments taken from the Jewish Scriptures, James shows that two advents of the Christ were foretold, one in humility and one in glory, and argues that no one could receive the remission of sins or enter the kingdom of heaven without being baptized in water "in the name of the threefold blessedness, as the true Prophet taught." James, as it turns out, is remarkably successful in his proclamation, such that over the course of seven days "he persuaded all the people and the high priest that they should hasten straightway to receive baptism." In other words, the entire Jewish nation, including its priestly leaders, are on the verge of converting to become followers of Jesus.

And then Paul arrives on the scene (ch. 70). He is not named, but it is quite clearly him: he is described as "one of our enemies" and in the next chapter he receives letters from the high priest to persecute the believers in Jesus in Damascus, an obvious reference to Acts 9. Just as the Jewish nation is about to turn to faith in Jesus, Paul intervenes and creates a ruckus, argues publicly with James, and begins "to excite the people and to raise a tumult" and "to drive all into confusion with shouting and to undo what had been arranged with much

labor." He then turns to violence, starts a riot so that "much blood was shed," and himself "attacked James and threw him headlong from the top of the steps" of the Temple, thinking that he had killed him (1.70).

This is obviously not a positive portrayal of Paul. He is the enemy; he is violently opposed to James—tries, in fact, to kill him. He prevents the wild success of the Christian mission, which was on the verge of converting the entire Jewish nation, even the high priest, to faith in Christ. This, to be sure, is the "pre-Christian" Paul. But there is no word anywhere in the book of his repenting of what he did or converting. For the *Recognitions*, penned in the name of Clement, the eventual leader of the church in Rome and Peter's right-hand man, Paul remains the enemy.

Homilies 2.15–18

Anti-Pauline polemic may also lie behind the famous discussion of the divinely ordained "pairs" (syzygies) in Hom. 2.15–18. In this address to Clement Peter provides a kind of schematized *Heilsgeschichte*, according to which God sends forth all things, including human beings, in pairs, with the inferior and the wicked preceding the superior and the good. And so, the temporary world precedes eternity; ignorance precedes knowledge. So too with "the leaders of prophecy": the wicked Cain came before the righteous Abel, Ishmael preceded Isaac. Peter then applies the logic to his own situation:

> It were possible, following this order, to perceive to what series Simon (Magus) belongs, who came before me (Simon Peter) to the Gentiles, and to which I belong who have come after him, and have come in upon him as light upon darkness, as knowledge upon ignorance, as healing upon disease. (ch. 17)

Later Peter points out that the Anti-Christ comes before Christ returns. And so on.

As earlier noted, Simon Magus is not simply a cipher for Paul throughout Peter's discourses. But one cannot help but draw the inferences in this case, as it is Paul in the Christian tradition who first goes out in the gentile mission field as the apostle to the gentiles.[71] In this understanding of things, Peter must follow in Paul's footsteps to correct those he has led astray.[72]

Homilies 17.13–19

A much clearer polemic against Paul occurs in *Homilies* 17.13–19, an attack by Peter on "Simon's" authorization to preach his version of the gospel based on an alleged vision of Christ. As Graham Stanton has recognized, in this case "there can be no doubt at all that behind the mask of Simon Magus stands Paul."[73] Among other things, as Stanton notes, whereas the authenticating visionary experience is widely associated with Paul (cf. Galatians 1–2; Acts 9), in the Pseudo-Clementines Simon Magus never (elsewhere) appeals to a vision of Jesus.

The scene begins with Simon objecting to Peter's claims about Jesus. He, Simon, has had a vision, and since visions come from God, one need not question their reliability. Peter, however, gets the upper hand in his reply. The one "who trusts to apparition or vision and dream is insecure. For he does not know to whom he is trusting. For it is possible either that he may be an evil demon or a deceptive spirit, pretending in his speeches to be what he is not" (ch. 14). Moreover, no one can question or converse with a vision, only with a living person. Indeed, it is evil demons who appear to the impious enemies of God. What is more: "Statements of wrath are made through visions and dreams, but the statements to a friend are made face to face … not through riddles and visions and dreams, as to an enemy" (ch. 18). Peter then draws his conclusion: "If, then, our Jesus appeared to you in a vision, made Himself known to you, and spoke to you, it was as one who is enraged with an adversary."

Simon's alleged vision contrasts with Peter's own interaction with Jesus: "But can anyone be rendered fit for instruction through apparitions? And if you say, 'It is possible,' then I ask, 'why did our teacher abide and discourse a whole year to those who were awake?'" (ch. 19). Peter then issues a challenge:

> But if you were seen and taught by Him, and became His apostle for a single hour, proclaim His utterances, interpret His sayings, love His apostles, contend not with me who accompanied Him. For in direct opposition to me, who am a firm rock, the foundation of the Church, you now stand. If you were not opposed to me, you would not accuse me, and revile the truth proclaimed by me. (ch. 19)

Here we see the real issue: it is a conflict between Peter, the firm rock, and the apostle Paul, the unstable visionary, who uttered a contrary proclamation on the basis of an alleged revelation, and in so doing stood opposed to the one who

spent an entire year in the presence of Jesus and was chosen by him to serve as the foundation of the church. As Stanton points out, that the author has the conflict of Peter and Paul clearly in mind is shown above all by the verbal links between the passage and the account of the Antioch incident in Gal. 2:11–14. In the *Homilies* Peter claims that Paul stands opposed to Peter (ἐναντίος ἀνθέστηκας μοι) just as in Gal. 2:11 Paul claims that he stood opposed to Peter (κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην; same verb). And in both cases the opposition is said to be because Peter stood κατεγνωσμένος..[74]

Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and Clement

By no stretch of the imagination can the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* be seen as principally polemical confrontations with Paul and Pauline Christianity. These are long, complex, and involved books with an array of other agendas.[75] At the same time, there are clear anti-Pauline elements scattered throughout their narratives and speeches. These anti-Pauline elements stand in stark contrast with the views we saw earlier in forgeries that championed Paul and his message, most notably the New Testament book of Acts. In these fourth-century forgeries, Paul's vision of the resurrected Jesus is not affirmed as an experience that authorizes his gospel message; on the contrary it is maligned and mocked. Here Paul is not shown standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Peter in his missionary activities; instead he is portrayed as one of Peter's enemies, attacked with some vehemence by the one chosen by Christ to be the foundation for the church. So too with James, whom Paul tries to murder and whose success in converting the entire Jewish nation is disrupted by none other than Paul. Here Paul's law-free gospel is portrayed as being at odds with the gospel of Christ, as we will see further in the chapter that follows.

In this connection it is interesting to see how two of the "co-workers" of Paul known from the New Testament writings are portrayed here. Barnabas figures importantly in the Pseudo-Clementine narrative (see *Recognitions* 1.7–13). He is the one who, at the beginning of the account, first comes to Rome, makes contact with the pagan Clement, preaches the true gospel in his presence, urges him to sail to Palestine to learn the truth of the gospel, and then meets him in Judea and introduces him to Peter, the hero of the account. There is nothing that ties Barnabas to Paul here; on the contrary, he is Peter's man and follows Peter's gospel. In fact, the reason he does not personally accompany Clement to Judea, but must precede him, is because he has to hurry back to celebrate a Jewish festival: "he hastened his departure, saying that he must by all means celebrate at

Judea a festal day of his religion that was approaching" (1.10). Barnabas, companion of Peter, and responsible for the fate of the future leader of the Roman church, Clement, is Jewish to the core, continuing to observe Jewish festivals still as a Christian. Is this a poke at the Pauline law-free gospel? In any event, not just Peter but also Barnabas stands over against Paul in this account, even though in the book of Acts Barnabas is closely connected precisely with Paul.

Then there is Clement. In the New Testament he has no connection with Peter but only with Paul, his "co-worker" who "contended together with me in the gospel" (Phil. 4:3). But not in these books forged in his name. He is converted by Peter, he follows Peter, he accepts Peter's gospel, he accepts Peter's castigation of Paul. And so not only Barnabas but also Clement has been taken from Paul and given to Peter, the foundation of the church who stands against Paul, his authority, and his message.

The Counterforgery of Recognitions 1.27–71

It has generally been conceded by scholars of the Pseudo-Clementines that the anti-Pauline polemic of *Recognitions* 1.66–71 is part of a larger unit (chapters 27–71), which was taken over by the author, but not from the Grundschrift.[76] The grounds are solid: it is a coherent unit, it has no parallel in the *Homilies*, and its views in some ways contrast with those of the *Recognitions* otherwise, for example, in the elevated role it gives to Jesus in relationship to Moses.[77] Gerd Lüdemann argued that the passage was intended to present an alternative view of the development of church history to that found in the New Testament book of Acts, in fact that it "sets out to correct a section of Luke's Acts with its own version of the story."[78]

No one has developed this line of thought more fully than F. Stanley Jones, and although the argument is generally made with reference to the source itself, the same can be said of its incorporation in the fuller account of the *Recognitions*.[79] Jones lists a number of parallels between the account and the book of Acts, including as the most secure: Rec. 1.65.2–3 parallels Acts 5:34–39 (Gamaliel calming the crowd); Rec. 1.71.3–4 parallels Acts 9:1–2, 22:4–5, 26:10–12 (Paul arranges with the high priest to persecute the Christians); and Rec. 1.36.2 parallels Acts 3:22–23 (quotations of Deut. 18:15 and Lev. 23:29). Several other overlaps Jones considers "probable": Rec. 1.34.2 parallels Acts 7:8 (summary of the genealogy of Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs); Rec. 1.41.1–2 parallels Acts 2:22–24 (Jesus is crucified even though he performed

signs and wonders); and Rec. 1.71.2 parallels Acts 4:4 (five thousand flee Jerusalem to Jericho). Jones finds twenty-two other instances of parallels that he considers "possible." What he finds particularly striking is that in many of these instances the overlaps include aspects of Lukan redaction, showing that the author of this portion of the *Recognitions* is actually using Acts.

More than that, the author behind *Recognitions* 1.27–71 has changed the story of Acts in significant ways. Here Paul, as we have seen, is the villain rather than the hero of the story; he hinders instead of promotes the Christian mission; and he is never said to convert. In Jones's opinion, the author of this source behind the *Recognitions* wanted to outstrip Acts by writing a better history; in fact, his account was intended to "replace Acts."[80]

There are clear problems with this view as a wholesale explanation for Rec. 1.27–71. Most obviously, the majority of the passage does not cover the same scope or material as the book of Acts: it is a description of the history of the world from its very beginning up to the seventh year after Christ's death. Most of it, in other words, has nothing to do with Acts, as recognized by Stanton: "so many of its traditions are unrelated to Luke's Acts that rivalry as a primary purpose should not be pressed too far."[81] Moreover, the way the passage treats Acts is not noticeably different from the way it treats its other sources, principally the Hebrew Bible, in radically shortening the narrative and emphasizing certain key points. Surely one would not argue that its author was trying to replace the Hebrew Bible as well.[82]

Even so, Lüdemann and Jones have made a good point, that the retelling of the incidents from Acts is, in Stanton's words, "tendentious and imaginative."[83] To that extent, its narrative appears intent on countering the views of Luke, clearly from a Jewish-Christian (as opposed to Pauline) perspective. This portion of the Pseudo-Clementines can thus be considered a kind of counterforgery.

There may be a trace of Christian supercessionism in this passage as well, particularly in its polemic against Jewish animal sacrifice. The key text is the indication of why Moses allowed animal sacrifice in the first place—as a concession to the faulty religious leanings of his fellow Israelites who were not ready to abandon their pagan practices altogether:

> When meantime Moses, that faithful and wise steward, perceived that the vice of sacrificing to idols had been deeply ingrained into the people from their association with the Egyptians, and that the root of this evil could not be extracted from them, he allowed them indeed to sacrifice, but permitted it to be done only to God, that by any means he might cut

> off one half of the deeply ingrained evil, leaving the other half to be corrected by another, and at a future time. (Rec. 1.36)

When Christ came as the prophet predicted by Moses in Deuteronomy 18, he fulfilled what Moses anticipated, by substituting baptism for sacrifice. As Annette Reed has argued, this attack on the practice of Jewish sacrifice would have been completely moot at the time of the writing, since the Temple had already been destroyed and no sacrifices were being performed in any event; moreover, the author is not maligning the religion of Moses but, as it were, affirming it. There is nothing "anti-Jewish" in the passage, to the extent that Jesus stands with Moses, not against him; Jews who have not accepted Christ are not condemned but are simply urged to change their minds: "the author's Christian supercessionism looks a lot like Jewish messianism."[84] In any event, this understanding that Jesus has superseded Moses at all stands at some tension with the rest of the *Recognitions* and the *Homilies*, as Reed has shown. But since the Christology, and the relationship of "Jews" and "Christians," is largely effected in nonpolemical terms through these two works, they are of less relevance to my present concerns.[85] In a broader sense, however, one could see the whole of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* as having a subtle but comparable polemical agenda:

> H(omilies) and R(ecognitions) appeal to the authority of this apostle [Peter] to promote an account of early church history that counters the epistles of Paul and the Book of Acts. Most notably, they exalt James and Peter as the true guardians of Jesus' message and the authentic leaders of the apostolic community, while condemning Paul and the law-free mission associated with him.[86]

Broader Polemic in the Pseudo-Clementines

Whereas *Recognitions* 1.27–71 has sometimes been seen as a counterforgery to the book of Acts, Annette Reed has argued that the *Homilies* taken as a whole can be seen as standing in direct tension with that other great historian of Christianity's first four centuries, Eusebius.[87] A broad comparison of Eusebius's ten-volume work with the twenty-book *Homilies* shows numerous parallels. They are practically contemporaneous, Eusebius from 290–312 CE, the *Homilies* from a few decades later. Eusebius wrote from Caesarea, the *Homilies* come from Syria. Many of their concerns are the same: tracing apostolic succession,

establishing ecclesiastical authority, responding to pagan critiques, defending orthodoxy against heresy, and explaining the relationship of the Christian church to Judaism. In addition, both extensively use earlier source materials.

Reed compares the views of the two under a number of enlightening rubrics. Eusebius maintains that apostolic succession occurs in all of the main churches of the orthodox tradition through "the successions of the holy apostles" (*H.E.* 1.1); the *Homilies* are concerned only about the succession through the Jerusalem church, and specifically Peter (Hom. 2.6–12; 3.15, 19; 11.35), who passes along the teaching of the "true prophet." Eusebius claims that Christianity, though continuous with the religion of Abraham and those before him, is discontinuous with Judaism, basing his argument on Gen. 49:10, that a scepter would fall away from Judah, opening up the way for the "new" thing to arrive in Jesus (e.g. *H.E*. 1. 6. 1–8); the *Homilies* claim that Moses and Jesus are both to be identified with the true prophet (Hom. 2.16–17; 3.17–21) and that they represent a single teaching (Hom. 8.6–7). The incarnation was not needed because of the failure of the Jews, but in order to allow the message to go to the gentiles (Hom. 3.18.3–19.1). Eusebius asserts that the mission to Jews was destined to fail, leading to the mission to gentiles (e.g., 2.1.8); the *Homilies* insist that the mission to the Jews was unnecessary, since Jews can be saved by the teachings of Moses (Hom. 8.5–7). The mission is for the pagans alone. Eusebius maintains that orthodoxy precedes heresy, which is by nature derivative and impotent; the *Homilies*—in the teaching of the syzygies (Hom. 2.15–18)—claims that the false comes prior to the true, and that falsehood is far from impotent (as seen in the successes of "Simon"). For Eusebius, Christianity is a new "ethnos"; this obviously poses a problem, then, for Jewish converts (what are they, exactly?); the *Homilies* use the term *Jew* even for gentile followers of Jesus (Hom. 11.16).

In light of these contrasts, Reed postulates that Eusebius provides a "parade example" of what Amos Funkenstein has called "counter history": "the process by which another group's history and sources are appropriated and reworked in the service of contrasting aims."[88] As she notes, Eusebius draws extensively on Josephus and Philo to describe the failings of Judaism; moreover, he relies on Hegesippus, himself possibly a "Jewish Christian" to narrate the history of "Jewish Christianity." If this view of Eusebius is right, then the possibility further presents itself that "the *Homilies* was compiled, at least in part, to counter this counter-history." That is to say, with many of the same concerns as Eusebius, the *Homilies* spin the tale in precisely a contrary way. This involves not merely alluding to Paul "in order to exclude him," but also telling the entire

story of the Christian mission and message in a way that stands at odds with the "orthodox" historian. It is, then, a counterforgery in what I am calling the weak sense, a forgery designed to counter views found in another writing, in this case a writing that was destined to attain the status of orthodoxy and to determine how historians understood the development of the Christian church for many centuries to follow.

1. E.g., a fifth-century anti-Jewish account of the Jewish mistreatment of Jesus and the early Christians, preserved in one Syriac and one Armenian manuscript; the James Liturgy of the sixth century, preserved in eighth-and ninth-century Greek and Syriac manuscripts, instrumental in the separation of the Syrian "Miaphysites" from the catholics; and the report of John Chrysostom, preserved in one Sahidic manuscript of the tenth century, to have discovered an ancient book by James that described Jesus' ascent to the seventh heaven; on this last see E. A. W. Budge, "An Encomium on Saint John the Baptist," in *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), pp. 128–45, 335–51.

2. F. H. Kern, *Der Charakter und Ursprung des Briefs Jakobi* (Tübingen: Fues, 1835).

3. *The Letter of James*, AB 37A (New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 7.

4. Ibid., p. 9.

5. Matt Jackson-McCabe, "The Politics of Pseudepigraphy and the Letter of James," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 621.

6. See pp. 242–47.

7. Contra J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), who argues that James would have known Greek. Sevenster's study has been superseded, indeed, demolished by the more recent investigations of M. Chancey, M. Bar Ilan, and C. Herzer mentioned in the previous chapter. And so, Lindemann, *Paulus*, is precisely wrong to maintain "The Greek of James is indeed the weakest argument against its authenticity" ("In der Tat ist die griechische Sprache des Jak das schwächste Argument gegen seine Echtheit," p. 241, n. 57). And when John Painter (*Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997) maintains that James *could* have been the author, since as a Galilean he would have been fluent in Greek, he is simply arguing on the basis of assertion, flying in the face of the evidence; his further claim that we need to take into account "the educative effect of the Jesus tradition" fails to address the hard issues (p. 238). Training in Greek composition was not part of first-century catechism.

8. “Es [bleibt] gleichwohl fraglich … dass einem galiläischen Handwerkersohn das rhetorische und sprachliche Niveau des Jak zuzutrauen sei.” “‘Jakobus, der Gerechte’: Erwägungen zur Verfasserfiktion des Jakobusbriefes,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 578.

9. “Selbst wenn man eine weite Verbreitung des Griechischen im Palästina des 1. Jh.s n. Chr. annimmt, wird man eine Abfassung des Jak durch den Herrenbruder selbst kaum für möglich halten, insbesondere, wenn man daneben das merklich einfachere Griechisch des Diasporajuden Paulus stellt.” *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), p. 211.

10. Sometimes in discussions of authenticity, the letter’s allusions to dominical traditions are brought into play, by advocates of both positions. But it should not be thought that the author’s failure to quote his brother explicitly demonstrates that James did not write the book; one can imagine all sorts of reasons for the absence of direct quotations. At the same time, the many parallels with the sayings of Jesus do not demonstrate that the author was his brother. Most early Christians would have known the teachings of Jesus, and many of them would have been interested in replicating these sayings in their reflections on the ethical lives of Christians.

11. Cf. Matt 22:34–50; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14, where “love,” not “works of the Law,” fulfills the Law.

12. It is important to note that the use of the term *synagogue* to refer to the Christians’ gathering does not indicate that the letter is either early or “Jewish,” as shown, for example, by such texts as Ignatius *Polycarp* 4:2 (“let there be more frequent synagogues”), *Shepherd*, Commandments 11:9 (“the synagogue of upright men”), and Dionysius of Alexandria, according to Eusebius, *H.E.* 9.9.2, 7.11.11.

13. See pp. 218–22.

14. *Letter of James*, pp. 94–96.

15. See pp. 305–8.

16. Johnson, *Letter of James*, p. 249. Johnson bases his argument on two claims, that for James ἔργα are never connected to the law, and that the common elements in the two authors is just as easily explained as resulting from the fact that they were both first-generation of a messianic movement that had faith in Jesus as the messiah. This view is effectively refuted by Matt Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law in the Letter of James: The Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, and the Law of Freedom* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Among other things, Jackson-McCabe points

out that there are simply too many verbal connections with Paul to be accidental (as I will show). Moreover, it is not true that ἔργα are not connected with the law in James—as seen most clearly in 1:25 and also in 2:1–13. (Below I argue that what Paul and James *mean* by ἔργα is different; but that is another matter.) Moreover, although it is true that typical discussions in ancient first-generation members of the Jesus messianic movement do tie "attitude and action" (faith and works), it is equally important to note that the terms used to *express* this important tie, outside of James and Paul, are never πίστις and ἔργα—let alone in connection to whether one can be considered "righteous" (using δικαιοῦσθαι) by faith apart from ἔργα.

7. Kari Syreeni, "James and the Pauline Legacy," in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity*, ed. Ismo Dunderberg *et al.* (Brill: Leiden, 2002), p. 401.

8. "Der Abschnitt Jak 2, 21–24 berührt sich jedenfalls so eng mit Röm 3.4, daß eine literarische Beziehung doch zu vermuten ist." Andreas Lindemann, *Paulus*, p. 247. See also, among a large host, Wiard Popkes, "James and Scripture: An Exercise in Intertextuality," *NTS* 45 (1999): 213–29.

9. Thus James 3:13–18 is close to 1 Corinthians 2–3, down to the wording (genuine wisdom over against earthly psychic eagerness for quarrels). Among other phrases and ideas that appear Pauline are "Lord of glory" 2:1 (cf. 1 Cor. 2:8), the contrast of "desire and death" 1:13–15 (cf. Rom. 6:11–13, 23; 7:7ff), and God's preference for the poor (2:5; cf. 1 Cor. 1:26–28). Moreover, the climactic chain of conclusions in 1:2–3 is like Rom. 5:3–5 (and 1 Peter 1:6–7). On the other hand, Martin Hengel, "Der Jakobusbrief als antipaulinische Polemik," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the NT: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis*, ed. G. Hawthorne and Otto Betz (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 248–78, is overly fanciful when he sees everything in the letter (esp. 3:1–12; 4:13–16; 5:13–16) as anti-Pauline.

0. "Jak behandelt nicht ein isoliertes theologisches Thema (in 2, 14–16), sondern schreibt auf dem Hintergrund der Entwicklung der (paulinischen) Missionskirchen. Möglicherweise gewann er sogar Zugang zu einigen paulinischen Kerntexten, evtl. freilich nicht auf direktem Weg, sondern durch mündliche oder schriftliche Vermittlung." *Der Brief des Jakobus* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), p. 39.

1. Margaret Mitchell, "The Letter of James as a Document of Paulinism?" in *Reading James with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James*, ed. Robert L. Webb and John S. Kloppenborg (London: T&T Clark, 2007), p. 75. I am not, however, persuaded by Mitchell's rather eccentric attempt

to show that the author of James was actually a later Paulinist trying to reconcile Paul (of Galatians) with Paul (of 1 Corinthians). In support she points to other later Paulinists such as 1 Clement and Polycarp, who make similar rhetorical moves to the same end. The difference, however, is stark. James states a Pauline theologoumenon and then argues against it so as directly to oppose a "Pauline" teaching. None of her other authorities does this.

2. "Paulus vertritt ja keineswegs den von Jak attackierten Glaubensbegriff." Wilhelm Pratscher, *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), p. 214.

3. And so, I am obviously arguing against those who continue to read James through Lutheran eyes as standing in conflict with Paul himself, as for example, Lindemann, *Paulus in ältesten Christentum:* "James 2:14–26 in this regard must be understood as an explicit disagreement with Paul. James does not reject a 'degenerate' Paulinism … he simply rejects the assertion that humanity is justified by faith alone" ("Jak 2, 14–26 ist insofern zu verstehen als expliziter Widerspruch gegen Paulus. Jak wendet sich nicht gegen einen 'entarteten' Paulinismus … er wendet sich einfach gegen die Behauptung, daß der Mensch aus Glauben allein gerechtgesprochen werde," p. 248). Lindemann does acknowledge that James's "misreading" of Paul corresponds to what is found in post-Pauline authors who favored his teaching (Eph. 2:8–9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5–7; 1 Clem. 32:4; Pol. Phil. 1:3). But that is just the point. James is attacking a later understanding of Paul embodied in forged Pauline traditions by later Paulinists.

4. *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, tr. Michael W. Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

5. David R. Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon* (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2007).

6. Irenaeus does not directly quote James, but he does, like James, follow a quotation of Gen 15:6 with the comment that Abraham "was called a friend of God" *(Adv. Haer*. 4.16.2). Nienhuis discounts this evidence on the simple grounds that Abraham is called the "friend of God" in Jewish literature as well (p. 36). But the point is the quotation and the epithet are combined in precisely the same way in both James and Irenaeus. That is hard to imagine as a historical accident.

7. It is too easy for Nienhuis to claim that the author hid his anti-Marcionite agenda so as not to be guilty of anachronism; one could just as well argue that the author was anti-Valentinian, anti-Thomasine, or anti-Sethian.

8. Matthias Konradt, "Der Jakobusbrief als Brief des Jakobus," in Petra V.

Gemünden et al., eds., *Der Jakobusbrief: Beiträge zur Rehabilitierung der 'strohernen Epistel'"* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003), pp. 16–53. Thus the parallels of James 1:2–3 with 1 Pet. 1:6–7 in particular show that the relationship was probably on the literary level Πειρασμοὶ ποικίλοι. . . . τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως: "[begegnet man] in der gesamten antiken Literatur nur an den genannten beiden Stellen." Konradt, "Jakobus, der Gerechte: Erwägung zur Verfasserfiktion des Jakobusbriefes," in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, p. 579. Cf. also James 4:6–10 with 1 Pet. 5c–9 (both replace LXX κύριος with θεός) and James 1:18, 21 with 1 Pet. 1:22–2:2 (conversion as rebirth).

). An issue raised, for example, in Jörg Frey, "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild im Judasbrief und im Zweiten Petrusbrief," in Frey *et al.* eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 683–732.

). J. Daryl Charles, *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 1993), p. 77. Charles goes astray only in trying to explain these similarities as deriving from the circumstance that the two authors were writing in the same Jewish Galilean milieu, as if both would have had similar training in Greek composition. Given what we have seen about literacy rates in rural Galilee, Frey "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild" is much more convincing in seeing in these linguistic parallels evidence for literary dependence.

. Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief. Der 2 Petrusbrief* (Düsseldorf: Benzinger Verlag, 1994), p. 17.

2. For a list of scholars on both sides since 1880, see Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark, 1990), p. 174 n. 261. Bauckham himself makes a spirited defense for authenticity.

3. See, for example, Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, who instances Paul's usage in 2 Cor. 13:5 ("your faith"), and Gal 1:23 ("preaching the faith he once tried to destroy"). But neither reference means what Jude means by "the faith." The first is a reference to "your faith"—which is not a body of knowledge or truths to be confessed; the latter reference uses the term to refer to a group of believers who put their trust in Christ. Again, that is different from "the body of knowledge that we call the faith." Even Davids admits that the use of the term in Jude compares most favorably with the Pastorals.

4. On Jude as a "peasant," see p. 219, n. 54.

5. The unreflective claims of R. Bauckham notwithstanding (see Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, 50, Waco, TX: Word, 1983, pp. 6–16, esp. pp. 15–16). Writing literacy did not come from hearing others speak the language and picking up conversational Greek for oneself. It took substantial training in a

school setting, requiring years of hard work. See pp. 242–47.

6. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 6.

7. *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude*, pp. 62–63.

8. So Bauckham, who argues that in two quotations (vv. 12, 13) the author bases his argument on wording found in Hebrew, not Greek, text; in three references to the OT (vv. 11, 12, 23) his vocabulary does not correspond to that of the LXX; p. 7. This assumes, of course, that the LXX text available to us today was a stable entity then as well.

9. So Bauckham, p. 7.

0. As I have repeatedly stated, becoming reading-literate in just one language took years and considerable resources; becoming writing-literate—at the level required to compose a book—took still more years. And that was in one's native tongue. To become writing-literate in a second language required intensive training. Where would Jude have found the time or resources to manage this training? It is true that his brother, Jesus, may have been extraordinary among his townspeople for learning to read (Hebrew), but that is a far cry from being able to compose a book in Hebrew, let alone in Greek. And everything suggests that Jesus was the outstanding exception in the family. Anyone who suggests that a person like the historical Jude could have learned Greek composition simply by traveling the world as a missionary has not taken seriously the scholarship on ancient literacy and on the educational systems of antiquity. Contrast Bauckham: "if his [Jude's] missionary travels took him among strongly Hellenized Jews there is no reason why he should not have deliberately improved his command of Greek to increase his effectiveness as a preacher"; p. 15.

1. Frederik Wisse, "The Epistle of Jude."

2. Ibid., p. 136.

3. Gerhard Sellin, "Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes," *ZNW* 77 (1986): 206–25.

4. *Jude, 2 Peter*, pp. 11–13.

5. Sellin, "Die Häretiker," goes too far in thinking that the τοῦτο of Jude 4 ("this condemnation") is inexplicable as a reference to the judgment described in v. 15, since there it is κρίσις rather than κρίμα. In his view it is a cross-reference back to Rom. 3:8. But it is hardly conceivable that a reader would make that link rather than the other, especially since the two words can be used synonymously, and in 15 it is found in a quotation (it obviously is not referring to the judgment of v. 6, as that refers to the angels, or of v. 9, which is about Michael and the Devil; only vv. 4 and 15 refer to the judgment of humans).

6. Sellin, "Die Häretiker," p. 211, n. 17.

7. Ibid.; Jörg Frey, “Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild im Judasbrief und im Zweiten Petrusbrief,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 683–732.

8. Sellin “Die Häretiker,” argues that vv. 6–7 are part of the polemic against the opponents, but this is taking the case a step too far. These two verses indicate past instances of judgment against the disobedient, not charges against the false teachers.

9. “Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild,” p. 698. Sellin is too extreme in insisting that the entire polemic of the book involves the relationship to angels, as when he argues that “defiling the flesh” in v. 8 refers to humans and angels inappropriately entering into one another’s spheres. That would be an odd meaning for “defiling the flesh,” given the other language invoking licentiousness. Rather, these opponents revile angels *and* carry the teaching of “grace” to an inappropriate extreme. One can imagine numerous possible connections between the two prongs of this attack. Are the opponents, for example, thought to despise all authority—angelic beings and moral codes?

0. “Es ist daher durchaus denkbar, dass eine Haltung, wie sie der Autor des Kol zur Sprache bringt, dem Verfasser des Jud als Leugnung der kosmologischen und eschatologischen Bedeutung der Engel und der durch sie repräsentierten Ordnung erscheinen.” “Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild,” p. 700.

1. “Wohl … könnte es Verbindungslinien geben zwischen dem Verfasser des Kolosserbriefes, der gegen die Engel-Verehrer polemisiert, und den Häretikern des Judasbriefes. Aus Kol. 2, 18 geht ja hervor, daß Gesetzesvorschriften und Engeldienst einerseits, Antinomismus und Verachtung der Engel andererseits zusammengehören. So scheinen mir die Häretiker des Judasbriefes in einer paulinischen Tradition zu stehen, deren ältestes Zeugnis der Kolosserbrief darstellt.” “Die Häretiker,” p. 222.

2. As I have stressed, such an author would have had no way of knowing that the views of these Paulinists differed from the views of Paul, lacking, as he did, access to modern critical analyses of the Pauline corpus and the modern scholarly reconstruction of the “real” Paul.

3. And so Frey’s conclusion is apt: “The choice of pseudonym in this regard does not serve to legitimatize the text and its content, or serves only in a very limited way; it serves primarily the assignation [of the text] to a particular line of tradition that is characterized by the figure of James and is represented by the Epistle of James, and that takes a critical stance against various developments in the Pauline-Deutero-Pauline tradition.” (“Die Wahl dieses Pseudonyms dient insofern nicht oder nur sehr wenig der Legitimation des Schreibens und seines

Inhalts, sondern primär der Zuordnung zu einer Traditionslinie, die durch die Gestalt des Jakobus markiert und durch den Jakobusbrief repräsentiert ist und verschiedenartigen Entwicklungen in der paulinisch-deuteropaulinischen Tradition kritisch gegenübertritt.") "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild," p. 702.

4. All translations are from Johannes Irmscher and Georg Strecker, "The Pseudo-Clementines," trans. R. McL. Wilson, in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Louisville, KY: West-minster/John Knox, 1992).

5. For a recent statement of other opinions, see Graham Stanton, "Jewish Christian Elements in the Pseudo-Clementine Writings," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), pp. 305–24.

6. Translation of Marvin Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, p. 23.

7. See Pierluigi Piovanelli, "'L'Ennemi est parmi Nous': Présences rhétoriques et narratives de Paul dans les Pseudo-Clémentines et autres écrits apparentés," in *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines—Plots in the Pseudo-Clementine Romance: Actes du deuxième colloque international sur la littérature apocryphe chrétienne, Lausanne—Genève, 30 août—2 septembre 2006*, Frédéric Amsler et al., eds. (Prahins, Switzerland: Éditions du Zèbre, 2008). I am obliged to Maria Doefler for this reference.

8. See Annette Yoshiko Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' as Counter-history? The Apostolic Past in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*," in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, eds. Gregg Gardner and Kevin L. Osterloh (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), p. 177, n. 17.

9. W. Ullmann, "Some Remarks on the Significance of the *Epistola Clementis* in the Pseudo-Clementines," *StPatr* 4 (1961): 332.

0. All translations are from Johannes Irmscher and Georg Strecker, "The Pseudo-Clementines," in Schneemelcher, ed. *New Testament Apocrypha*.

1. The tradition that Peter personally ordained Clement as bishop of the Roman church, directly after himself, without intermediating bishops, is also found in Tertullian, *Prescription*, 32.

2. Ullmann's view ("Significance," pp. 296–98) that the view of Clement's ordination derived from a careful reading of Irenaeus is flawed. On one hand, the tradition is also in Tertullian (see n. 61). Moreover, Ullmann's exegesis of *Adv. Haer*. 3.3.2–3 involves overreading: both Peter and Paul "hand over" the bishopric of Rome to Linus. Is that really categorically different from Clement, who was "called" to the position? It appears, instead, that Irenaeus is working to show the transitions of Roman leadership in such a way as to smooth over the

stormy differences between Peter and Paul, which otherwise affected various factions within the Roman community.

3. The *Homilies* are usually dated to 300–320, and survive in their original Greek; the *Recognitions* are dated to 360–380 but survive only in the Latin translation of Rufinus. For the texts see Bernhard Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen: I Homilien*, ed. J. Irmischer (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953; 2nd ed., ed. F. Paschke, 1965; 3rd ed., ed. G. Strecker, 1994); Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen II Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung*, ed. F. Paschke (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1965; 2nd ed., ed. G. Strecker, 1994).

4. For histories of research, see F. Stanley Jones, "The Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research," *Second Century* 2 (1982): 1–33, 63–96; and F. Amsler, "État de la recherché récente sur le roman pseudo-clémentin," in F. Amsler et al., eds., *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines—Plots in the Pseudo-Clementine Romances* (Lausanne: Éditions de Zèbre, 2008), pp. 25–45. A useful general overview can be found in Graham Stanton, "Jewish Christian Elements in the Pseudo-Clementine Writings," in Skarsaune and Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, pp. 305–24. A fuller introduction is F. Stanley Jones, "Introduction to the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in Jones, ed., *Pseudoclementina Elchasaiticaque inter Judaeochristiana: Collected Studies* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 203, Leuven: Peeters, in press).

5. So Han J. W. Drijvers, "Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines," in Drijvers, "Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *Loyalitätskonflikte in der Religionsgeschichte*, FS Carsten Colpe, ed. Christoph Elsas and Hans Kippenberg (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1990), pp. 314–23. More recently, with a different spin, see F. Stanley Jones, "Marcionism in the Pseudo-Clementines," *Poussières de christianisme et de judaïsme antiques*, ed. A. Frey and R. Gounelle (Prahins: Editions du Zèbre, 2007), pp. 225–44. It is a mistake to conclude, however, that since the work was anti-Marcionite, it could not also be Jewish-Christian, as Drijvers avers. See F. Stanley Jones, "Jewish Christianity of the *Pseudo-Clementines*," in *Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics,'* ed. Antti Marjanen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 315–34.

6. See especially F. Stanley Jones, "An Ancient Jewish Christian Rejoinder to Luke's Acts of the Apostles: Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1.27–71," *Semeia* 80 (1997): 223–45; and his fuller study, *An Ancient Jewish Christian Source on the History of Christianity Pseudo-Clementine "Recognitions" 1.27–71*, SBLTT 37, Christian Apocrypha Series 2 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995).

7. Nicole Kelley, *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines:*

Situating the Recognitions in Fourth Century Syria (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); and Kelley, "Problems of Knowledge and Authority in the Pseudo-Clementine Romance of *Recognitions*" *JECS* 13 (2005): 315–48; Annette Yoshiko Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' after the 'Parting of the Ways': Approaches to Historiography and Self-Definition in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 189–231; Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' as Counter-history?" pp. 173–216; and Reed, "Heresiology and the (Jewish-)Christian Novel: Narrativized Polemics in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*," in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, eds. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 273–98.

8. M. J. Edwards, "The *Clementina*: A Christian Response to the Pagan Novel," *CQ* 42 (1992), p. 462; Dominique Côté, "La fonction littéraire de Simon le magician dans les Pseudo-Clémentines," *LTP* 57 (2001): 513–23.

9. See pp. 318–20.

0. All quotations of the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* are taken from Thomas Smith, "Pseudo-Clementine Literature," *ANF*, vol. 8.

1. Even in Acts, although Peter is the first to convert a gentile (Acts 8), it is Paul who first engages in a sustained gentile mission.

2. Although even here Simon cannot be seen as "Paul without remainder." Peter goes on to describe Simon in the following chapter, and to discuss his history; clearly he is not thinking directly of Paul here.

3. "Jewish Christian Elements," p. 315.

4. Ibid., p. 316.

5. For a sense of the range of issues, see the most recent collection of essays, *The Pseudo-Clementines*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer (Leuven: Peeters, 2010).

6. See especially Jones, *An Ancient-Jewish Christian Source*; and Jones, "An Ancient Jewish-Christian Rejoinder."

7. See Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' after the 'Parting of the Ways.'"

8. "AntiPaulinism in the Pseudo-Clementines," in *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity*, ed. G. Lüdemann and Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), pp. 169–94; see esp. p. 183.

9. See note 66.

0. "Jewish-Christian Rejoinder," p. 243.

1. Stanton, "Jewish Christian Elements," p. 318.

2. Jones's claims that the source attempts to write a "better history" than Acts is

convincing only to the extent that any alternative account tries to do better than the one that it is opposing. But the specific arguments that he uses are for the most part unpersuasive. For example, the claim that the source focuses on only one encounter between the apostles and the Jewish leaders shows that it “has definitely provided a better arranged and more vivid account” (*Ancient Jewish Christian Source*, p. 241) rests on subjective evaluations of plot and structure. One need always ask: Better for whom? And on what grounds?

3. “Jewish Christian Elements,” p. 322.

4. “‘Jewish Christianity’ after the ‘Parting of the Ways,’” pp. 212–13.

5. For exposition of key passages, see Reed, “‘Jewish Christianity’ after the Parting of the Ways.’” For the Jewish Christian elements of the Pseudo-Clementines more broadly, see most recently F. Stanley Jones, “The Jewish Christianity of the *Pseudo-Clementines*,” in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian ‘Heretics,’* ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 315–34.

6. Reed, “Jewish Christianity after the ‘Parting of the Ways,’” p. 198.

7. Annette Yoshiko Reed, “‘Jewish Christianity’ as Counter-history?” pp. 173–216.

8. Reed, “‘Jewish Christianity’ as Counter History,” pp. 212–13, with reference to Amos Funkelstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 36–49.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Anti-Jewish Forgeries

Many of the writings that we considered in the previous chapter attacked Paul while advancing a contrary understanding of the Christian gospel that can be called, despite all the term's well-known problems, "Jewish-Christian." The predominant tendency among our surviving sources, however, both forged and orthonymous, lies in the opposite direction. Indeed, attacks on Jews as people and on Judaism as a religion quickly became de rigueur in most of the Christian circles we have close familiarity with from the literary record. The history of Christian anti-Judaism is complex, but inordinately well documented, and I do not need to trace even its broad lines here.[1] The rise of anti-Jewish sentiment within a range of Christian communities —proto-orthodox and heterodox—led, as one might expect, to the production of forgeries that, under the name of authoritative figures, castigated Jews and the religion they practiced.[2] In this chapter we will consider a number of these works, starting with one of the great archaeological discoveries of texts in modern times, the Gospel of Peter.

THE GOSPEL OF PETER

For centuries the best-known account of a Gospel of Peter came in Eusebius' description of its encounter and exposure by Serapion, bishop of Antioch at the very end of the second century. Eusebius includes in his report a lengthy but frustratingly partial citation of Serapion's own pamphlet dealing with the matter. Serapion first heard of the Gospel of Peter while making his episcopal rounds in the village of Rhossus. Learning that the church there used Peter's Gospel, but not perusing it for himself, he deemed it acceptable for use. Only later was he informed that the book had been propagated by a group of Docetists. After examining it, Serapion decided that it was for the most part orthodox; but it contained certain "additions" to the Gospel story that he considered spurious and dangerous. On these grounds he forbade future use of the book, appending to his account a list of the offensive passages. It is much to be regretted that Eusebius chose not to cite this appendix, as we are, as a result, unable to determine for certain if the fragmentary Gospel of Peter discovered in 1886–87 is in fact the one Serapion considered objectionable. But there are good reasons for assuming

that it is, as we will see.

First, however, it is important to note that Justin Martyr, some fifty years before Serapion, also gives evidence of knowing the Gospel of Peter, in a much-controverted passage in his Dialogue with Trypho. On fifteen occasions throughout his writings, Justin refers to the Gospels by calling them the ἀπομνημονεύματα the "Memoirs." In most instances he explains that these are specifically the "memoirs of the apostles," and in one case he makes it quite clear that he is referring to literary productions, Gospels, produced by apostles: οἱ γὰρ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖςγενομένοις ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ καλεῖται εὐαγγέλια (I *Apol*. 66.3). On the one occasion we are most interested in, however, he refers one set of Memoirs to a specific apostle:

> Καὶ τὸ εἰπεῖν μετωνομακέναι αὐτὸν Πέτρον ἕνα τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ γεγράφθαι ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν αὐτοῦ γεγενημένον καὶ τοῦτο, μετὰ τοῦ καὶ ἄλλους δύο ἀδελφοὺς, υἱοὺς Ζεβεδαίου ὄντας, ἐπωνομακέναι ὀνόματι τοῦ Βοανεργές, ὅ ἐστιν υἱοῖ βροντῆς. . . . (*Dial*. 106.3)
>
> And when it says that he changed the name of one of the apostles to Peter, and when also this is written in his Memoirs, that he changed the name of … the sons of Zebedee to Boanerges, which is "sons of thunder.…"

Scholars such as Hilgenfeld and Harnack maintained that the reference should be read in the most straightforward sense, so that the possessive pronoun "his" refers to its nearest antecedent, "Peter," making this the earliest reference to the existence of the Gospel of Peter.[3] Naysayers have taken a variety of positions, some arguing that "his" refers to Jesus, so that the αὐτοῦ is some kind of objective genitive, or that it refers specifically to the Gospel thought by Papias to be Peter's version of the Gospel, that is, the Gospel of Mark—thus, most emphatically, Claus-Jürgen Thornton, in an article that is more learned than compelling.[4]

Against the passage referring to the Gospel of (= about) Jesus is, to begin with, a simple question of grammar, overlooked by such advocates of the view as Paul Foster, in his recent full-length commentary.[5] Objective genitives occur with nouns of action (love, hate, vision, and so on). A "memoir" (like a "book") does not seem to qualify; Foster, at least, provides nothing analogous. But what is more, how can a personal pronoun in the genitive be an objective genitive? "His book" or "his writing" or "his anything" surely indicates possession (the one who owns it) or derivation (the one who created it). Yet more significant, we

have the other uses throughout Justin's writings, where "Memoirs of the Apostles," clearly refers to the books that the apostles wrote, as explicated in the reference cited above of 1 *Apol*. 66.3. That is to say, the genitive following ἀπομνημονεύματα is consistently a genitive of source or origin. Is there any compelling reason, apart from a general unwillingness to see this as a reference to the Gospel of Peter, not to take it this way here?[6]

On the contrary, a compelling case for reading it this way has been made by P. Pilhofer. In particular Pilhofer is opposed to the idea that Peter's "Memoirs" could be a reference to the Gospel of Mark. Taking it this way presupposes knowledge of Papias, whom Justin never mentions, even though he may be front-and-center in the minds of modern scholars thinking about the Gospel of Mark in relation to Peter. But there are positive reasons for thinking that Justin has the Gospel of Peter in mind, that Justin has, in fact, been influenced elsewhere by the accounts distinctive to it. As Pilhofer points out, where Justin's comments on the life of Jesus overlap with the surviving narrative in the Akhmim fragment of the Gospel of Peter, he appears to rely on it in substance. For example, the guilt of the Jews in the death of Jesus–they are the ones who actually kill him—is the same in both (e.g., *Dial*. 85.2 "who suffered and was crucified by your people under Pontius Pilate"; cf. *GPet*. 5–10); and in both accounts the disciples are said to have fled after Jesus' crucifixion (*Dial*. 53.5; cf. *GPet*. 26, 59), unlike in the New Testament Gospels.

Two specific passages especially merit attention. According to 1 Apol. 35.6, it is the Jews, not the Roman soldiers, who mock Jesus (thus also *GPet*. 5–10, but not the Gospels of the New Testament);[7] and in *Dial*. 97.3, when Jesus' clothes are divided, the phrase used is λαχμὸν βάλλοντες, a phrase that never occurs in Greek literature before Justin, with one exception: *Gospel of Peter* 12, καὶ λαχμὸν ἔβαλον. Confronted with these similarities, Foster asks which direction the dependence was more likely to go, from the Gospel of Peter to Justin or the other way around. He opts for the latter option, but how can that be the better alternative? Which would be more likely, that a Gospel writer would comb through the lengthy, discursive writings of an apologist in order to ferret out isolated and scattered dominical traditions to include in his Gospel account, or that an apologist would rely on a Gospel text for his occasional references to the life of Jesus? Surely it is the latter. And we need constantly to recall that after referring to Peter in *Dial*. 106.3, Justin does refer to "his Memoirs."[8] This point has been recently reemphasized by Katharina Greschat, an advocate for Pilhofer's view, who provides additional supporting evidence.[9]

The reason Justin's witness matters is, in part, that it provides a *terminus ante*

quem for the Gospel of Peter as the first half of the second century, when it was already in circulation and known in Rome, and in fact accepted by a prominent proto-orthodox teacher there as a scriptural authority. This conclusion also shows, as a sidelight, that whether or not Justin used a Gospel harmony, as Bellinzoni and others have argued, he also used separate Gospels.[10]

The discovery of the Akhmim fragment of the Gospel of Peter by a French archaeological team in the 1886–87 season caused a wide stir, and raised a number of immediate questions. The first was whether this fragment was part of the Gospel known to Serapion. Generally scholars thought the answer was yes. But this raised the question of the alleged docetism of the text, with some scholars finding traces of a docetic Christology in the comment that when crucified, Jesus "was silent as if he felt no pain" (v. 10), in his cry from the cross "My power, O power, you have left me" (v. 19), in the note that he was then "taken up" (while his body was still obviously on the cross; v. 19), and in the very un-humanlike appearance of his body, tall as a mountain, after the resurrection (v. 40). In the resurgence of interest in the Gospel in more recent decades, however, some scholars have argued that a docetic view was more often being read into the text rather than out of it, and that as a consequence there is no compelling reason to see this book as the one known to Serapion.[11] In response it might be pointed out that Serapion indicated that parts of the Gospel were perfectly orthodox and others could be read heretically, and that is certainly true of the fragment that we have. Finally, scholars were obsessed with the relation of this Gospel to the canonical four: Did it use them? Was it independent of them? Or, as in the famous but rather uninfluential proposal of J. D. Crossan, was the Gospel based on an earlier account, the Cross Gospel, a now-lost source of the canonical versions that is better represented in Peter than in any of them?[12]

All of these concerns are fueled more by an interest in seeing how the Gospel relates to external factors (Serapion, docetism, the canonical Gospels) than by a concern with what we find within the Gospel itself. Two features of the Gospel are significant for my present purposes: it makes a clear, but false, authorial claim; and its narrative is driven, in no small measure, by a polemical agenda of showing that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus.

The Pseudepigraphic Claim

No one doubts that the account is forged. Whereas most of the narrative is given in the third person, things change in vv. 26–27:

> But I and my companions were grieving and went into hiding, wounded in heart. For we were being sought out by them as if we were evildoers who wanted to burn the Temple. While these things were happening, we fasted and sat mourning and weeping, night and day, until the Sabbath.[13]

The author, then, was allegedly one of the disciples. It is at the very end that we learn which one he is: "But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew, took our nets and went off to the sea. And with us was Levi, the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord …" (v. 60). And that is where the text breaks off, in the middle of a sentence. We are fortunate that it did not break off a verse earlier: we would never have known which of the Twelve this author was claiming to be.

With very few exceptions most scholars date the account to sometime in the (early) second century.[14] Most important for our purposes, unlike the anonymous earlier Gospels that came to be included in the canon, this one is written by an author making a false self-identification. It is a forgery in the name of Simon Peter.

The Anti-Jewish Agenda

One of the Gospel of Peter's distinctive emphases is evident at the outset of the surviving fragment: "… but none of the Jews washed his hands, nor did Herod or any of his judges.[15] Since they did not wish to wash, Pilate stood up. Then King Herod ordered the Lord to be taken away and said to them, 'Do everything that I ordered you to do to him.'"

The fragment begins in the middle of the scene of the hand-washing at Jesus' trial. Pilate is not explicitly said to have washed his hands, but that is clearly what has happened in the preceding lines that are now lost. Unlike the Matthean parallel, however, here the emphasis is on what "the Jews"—Herod, the Jewish king, and his Jewish judges—specifically refuse to do. They are the ones, not Pilate, responsible for Jesus' death. Indeed, in the next line we learn that it is the Jewish king Herod, not the Roman governor, who orders Jesus' execution.

It is not just the Jewish leaders (King Herod and his judges) who are maligned for their role in the crucifixion: "none of the Jews" washed his hands. The emphasis continues throughout the account. Herod delivers Jesus "over to the people" (τῷ λαῷ) for punishment (v. 5), and they, the Jewish people, are the ones who mock and then crucify him:

> Those who took the Lord began pushing him about, running up to him and saying, “Let us drag around the Son of God, since we have authority over him.” They clothed him in purple and sat him on the judgment seat, saying, “Give a righteous judgment, O King of Israel!” One of them brought a crown made of thorns and placed it on the Lord’s head. Others standing there were spitting in his face; some slapped his cheeks; others were beating him with a reed; and some began to flog him, saying, “This is how we should honor the Son of God.” They brought forward two evildoers and crucified the Lord between them. (vv. 6–10)

The author is not hesitant to lambaste the Jews for what they have done: “Thus they brought all things to fulfillment and completed all their sins on their heads” (v. 17). Later they realize just how evilly they have behaved and foresee the divinely ordained punishment. Jerusalem will now be destroyed by God as a result: “Then the Jews, the elders, and the priests realized how much evil they had done to themselves and began beating their breasts, saying ‘Woe to us because of our sins. The judgment and the end of Jerusalem are near’” (v. 25).

But this does not stop them from doing yet more mischief. The disciples of Jesus are forced to go into hiding because the Jews are trying to track them down “as if we were evildoers who wanted to burn the Temple” (v. 26). Too late do the Jewish people realize that they have put an innocent man to death: after the clear signs given at his death, they bemoan what they have done, although they are not said to repent: “If such great signs happened when he died, you can see how righteous he was!” (v. 28). Then the Jewish leaders accompany the Roman guards to watch the tomb, and with them observe Jesus raised from the dead, and go in to tell Pilate:

> Greatly agitated, they said, “He actually was the Son of God.” Pilate replied, “I am clean of the blood of the Son of God; you decided to do this.” Then everyone approached him to ask and urge him to order the centurion and the soldiers to say nothing about what they had seen. “For it is better,” they said, “for us to incur a great sin before God than to fall into the hands of the Jewish people and be stoned.” And so Pilate ordered the centurion and the soldiers not to say a word. (vv. 45–49)

Rather than convert, they arrange a cover-up. And at the end they are still to be feared, as the women going to the tomb realize: “Now Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord, had been afraid of the Jews, since they were inflamed with

anger" (v. 50).

One feature of the text worth noting is that even though the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people are so obviously painted as the culprits in the death of Jesus and its aftermath, the disciples of Jesus are themselves concerned to keep the Jewish Law, rigorously. And so they appear to observe the Sabbath day (v. 27) and to have kept the feast of unleavened bread (v. 58). Why, in an anti-Jewish text, are Jesus' followers portrayed as pious Jews?

One might suspect that this is a case of historical verisimilitude. But it is also possible that Jesus' followers are to be understood to be the "true" Jews, the ones who really do perform God's will, as opposed to those who call themselves Jews but are opposed to it. This possibility relates to some of the ironies embedded in the narrative, which call to mind those highlighted in another anti-Jewish account, the Gospel of John. The most obvious irony in the Gospel of Peter's crucifixion scene is the fear, expressed twice, that Jesus' body needs to be removed from the cross before the Sabbath, so as not to violate the Jewish Law. For this account, Jews who have just killed the messiah of God are concerned not to break the Law. This is reminiscent of the irony of the Fourth Gospel, where at Jesus' trial the Jewish leaders refuse to enter the Praetorium because they want to be ritually pure in order to eat the Passover meal that evening (John 18:28), not realizing that it is precisely the Passover Lamb they are about to slay in their execution of Jesus.

Other ironies abound in the Gospel of Peter's brief narrative. The Jewish people who revile Jesus think they have authority over him, not realizing that he is the Lord (v. 6); they mockingly call him the King of Israel and demand a judgment, when in fact they will be judged for what they have done to him (vv. 7, 25); they crown him, slap him, beat him, and flog him, since that is their way of honoring the Son of God, who will return the favor when it comes time to destroy Jerusalem (v. 25). All these ironies heighten the heinous behavior not just of the Jewish leaders but also of the Jewish λαός..

What then is the function of the anti-Judaism in the text? Some scholars have argued that the attacks are directed against the Jewish leaders but not the Jewish people. And so J. D. Crossan can argue that "The Gospel of Peter is … more 'anti-Jewish' with regard to the authorities than any of the canonical gospels but also more 'pro-Jewish' with regard to the *people* than any of them."[16] But it is extremely difficult to see how this can be read out of a text that accuses the Jewish people of crucifying Jesus. Denker similarly sees the account as pinning the blame for the cover-up of the resurrection on the Jewish leaders (that part is true) in order to win Jews over to the Christian message,[17] a view similar to A.

Kirk's that the blame on the Jewish leaders would lead Jewish people to reject them in favor of the church.[18] Neither of these views can explain why the Jews as a people are so harshly treated in the text. T. Nicklas argues that the author wanted to stress that Jews were fulfilling Scripture in their rejection of Jesus, but that once they realize what their leaders have done in hiding the message of the resurrection, they would be more inclined to convert.[19]

J. Verheyden critiques all these views, and argues that the Gospel of Peter is not promoting any particular agenda when it portrays the Jews as guilty in the death of Jesus. The author instead is simply recounting, unreflectively, the traditions about Jesus' death as they have come down to him. Had he wanted to pin significant blame on the Jews, he would have been more explicit in his denunciation, rather than stating Jewish involvement in a rather banal and matter-of-fact manner. In Verheyden's view, the author of the Gospel of Peter

> has no great design or theologically profound message to offer. His agenda is far more modest. He tells a story that was known to all, and he does this in a way that appeals to an audience that was probably as little concerned with doctrine as it was eager for being confirmed in its opinions and prejudices about those who it was convinced had murdered Jesus.[20]

In my view this is taking the matter too far. As seen above, the account is permeated with anti-Jewish comments from beginning to end. The Roman governor Pilate is exculpated for the death of Jesus; it is the Jews who are responsible. And not just the Jewish leaders, but the Jewish people. Even if this is simply how the author "knows" the story—Verheyden's view—he has learned it as it has been passed through a virulently anti-Jewish matrix, far more virulent than even what we find in the New Testament. The Jews killed Jesus, and God will now destroy Jerusalem in punishment. And even though Jews realize with horror what they have done and the fate that now is to befall them, not one of them repents.

To return to our question, how are we to account for such vitriol against the Jews? Why need we look any farther than the rising tension with and hatred of Jews among (some) Christians of the second century? This was a century that saw the appearance of the epistle of Barnabas with its audacious claim that Jews have always misunderstood their own religion and that the Old Testament is a Christian, not a Jewish, book; a century that saw the rise of the Christian *adversus Ioudaeos* literature with such authors as Justin and, soon thereafter,

Tertullian; a century that saw the most heinous charges of deicide leveled against the Jews in the Paschal Homily of Melito. And we will see similar charges to those leveled against Jews in the Gospel of Peter in yet other passion narratives of still later times, when we come to the Pilate literature.

For now, we might conclude by returning to the issue of forgery. Given the anti-Jewish element of the book, why did its author decide to call himself Peter? The question is easier to ask than answer; in no small measure we are handicapped by the size of the small fragment of the text that survives. Any assessment of its authorial claim would necessarily depend on what could be found in the rest of the now-lost materials. But even with what little we have, one can think of reasons for an unknown author of such a second-century account to claim to be Peter. On one hand, the mere claim lends credibility to this version of the story and thereby assures a wider readership. But even beyond this, is it an accident that this, the most anti-Jewish of our early Gospels, is placed on the pen of an apostle who was thought to insist most strongly on the Jewish character of the gospel, and to have been a missionary specifically to Jews?

Peter became a battleground over which the Jewishness of Christianity was fought. In the Pseudo-Clementine literature he is portrayed as a proponent of a form of Christianity that adhered to the Law of Moses (see, e.g., the *Epistula Petri*). In the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, he avers that Jews who follow Moses are on a soteriological par with gentiles who follow Jesus. In these lengthy romances, Judaism is affirmed and Jews are praised, by Peter, the head disciple and foundation of the Christian church. But not in the Gospel of Peter. Here Jews are enemies of God who crucify their own messiah; their leaders hide the truth of Jesus' resurrection and persecute Jesus' disciples. At the end of the day, both sets of writings—the Pseudo-Clementines and the Gospel of Peter—use Peter, the Jewish follower of Jesus and well-known evangelist among the Jews, to set forth their visions of the message of Jesus in relationship to Judaism. In the Gospel the portrayal is hateful: Jews are responsible for executing Jesus and God will exact on them a penalty.

THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH

The Ascension of Isaiah is unusual in being a Christian apocalyptic text written about, and partially in the name of, a great prophet of the Old Testament. The book is clearly divided into two parts. The first five chapters describe the Martrydom of Isaiah under the wicked Israelite king Manasseh at the instigation

of the false prophet Belchira, who is empowered by Beliar. These chapters include a description of Isaiah's prophecy of the coming and reception of Christ on earth, and the apostasy that will follow his ascension. The latter is the one major event between the departure of the "Beloved," the book's favored epithet for Christ, and the apocalyptic end. This opening section of the book ends with Isaiah's death, as he is sawn in half with a "treesaw."

Chapters 6 through 11 recount an earlier vision of Isaiah, in which he ascends through the seven heavens, observing the angelic hosts at each level, until he reaches the highest heaven, the realm of God himself, whence he observes the descent and reascent of the Beloved through the realms below, assuming a different angelic form on his descent so as not to be recognized en route, and providing, as required, the proper passwords to be allowed passage. There follows a description of the incarnation and crucifixion, and then the Beloved's reascent in glory.

Scholarship on this apocalypse has long been obsessed with theories of sources.[21] As Richard Bauckham notes in his concise history of research, since W. Gesenius in 1821, most scholars have agreed that the Ascension of Isaiah is not the unified work of a single author.[22] For much of the second half of the twentieth century the theory of R. H. Charles held sway, that the book comprises three earlier sources, a Jewish Martyrdom of Isaiah, edited by a Christian (much of chs. 1–5), a Testament of Hezekiah (3:13b–4:18), and the Vision of the book's final six chapters. In 1973 A. Caquot tried to isolate the Jewish source behind the Martyrdom, but all such attempts—along with the idea of any such independent source at all—were destroyed by the work of Mauro Pesce, who showed that the Martyrdom is not a Christianized version of a Jewish source, but a Christian text through and through, based in part on Jewish haggadic traditions.[23] Pesce's view is now widely held. The Martyrdom is so obviously and thoroughly Christianized that it is difficult to remove Christian elements to obtain a Jewish core. It is filled with references to the Beloved, for example, and there are traces of an incipient trinitarianism, as in 1.7: "the Beloved of my Lord and the Spirit that speaks in me."

E. Norelli has argued at length that chapters 1–5 are a coherent and unified work by a single author, with a central theme involving the conflict between true and false prophecy. In addition, he maintains that the Vision of chapters 6–11 is an earlier composition that had circulated independently, which was later joined to the Martyrdom by the author of the latter, who composed 11.41–43 to bind the two parts together. The two major portions of the work, then, reflect different phases of the history of the community of prophets from which they emerged.[24]

Bauckham wants to take the matter a step further still. In his judgment the entire Ascension is the single composition of a solitary first-century Christian author who used the book of Daniel as his generic model, with its opening narrative only loosely connected with the visions in the second half of the book. This view, however, may propose an implausibly early date for the final product of the Ascension. There is nothing in Christian literature of the first century analogous to the descent and reascent of the Beloved through the seven heavens, using passwords as necessary to pass through the realms controlled by others.

Jonathan Knight places the final text after the apostolic age, given comments made in 3.21–31, but before "full-blown Gnosticism," since the Vision evinces parallels with Gnostic thought yet lacks Gnostic cosmology such as is known from the writings of the Nag Hammadi library that date from the midsecond century. Here too, however, one should be wary of placing too much emphasis on a unilinear ideological development among texts, as if Gnostic writings written after 150 CE necessarily evidence developed cosmogonic myths. As we will see, the early to middle second century provides a plausible date for the Ascension. Certainly no detailed account of a divine being's ascent and descent through the layers of the heavens—replete with passwords—can be found earlier.

The Pseudepigraphic Character of the Book

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the Ascension of Isaiah is a textbook example of "embedded pseudepigraphy." The book as a whole does not claim to be written by Isaiah, but periodically through the course of its narrative "Isaiah" inserts himself to describe his own history and vision. And so the narrative begins in the third person and continues that way up to 3.30 ("for each will say what seems pleasing in his own eyes"[25]) and then suddenly, without explanation, moves into the first person in 3.31 ("And they will set aside the prophecies of the prophets which were before me and also pay no attention to these my visions …"). The narrative continues in the first person (see 4.1, 13, 20) before returning to the third person in 5.1. So too in the Vision, chapter 6 describes Isaiah entering into a trance in the third person, but Isaiah himself begins to narrate his vision in the first person starting in 7.2 ("In that moment when I was prophesying according to things heard by you, I saw a sublime angel …"). So too at the end, there is an abrupt shift from first to third person, at 11.35–36 ("'This have I seen.' And Isaiah told it to all who stood before him …"). Thus the author of the book often removes himself from consideration and feigns the

identity of Isaiah himself. It should not be argued that this is simply the generic device of apocalypses and so should not be taken seriously as an authorial claim. As I showed in an earlier chapter, pseudepigraphy is indeed a regular feature of both Jewish and Christian apocalypses, but the authorial claims were meant to be believed and trusted. Whoever wrote the book of Daniel in the second century BCE meant his readers to take seriously his claim to be the wise man and prophet of four hundred years earlier; otherwise his "predictions" would have carried no probative force. These books were not written under innocent pseudonyms, but were forged.[26]

We should also guard against thinking that the goal of forgers of apocalypses was the same in every case. Each apocalypse pursues its own agenda and the authorial question needs always to be pursued in that light. In some apocalypses the function of the authorial claim makes particular sense, when, for example, the seer foretells what will happen in the future even though he is, in fact, relating what had already happened in the past, thereby verifying his "vision" for his reader. But that is not the case with the Ascension of Isaiah, which is not concerned to relate the course of human history through a variety of maleficent kingdoms aligned against God (contrast Daniel). And so how might we explain the authorial function here?

Knight provides one explanation worth considering.[27] In his judgment, the book is principally about the defeat of Beliar by Christ, and is written to provide hope for Christians who are undergoing persecution in the early second century. For this author the end is near and the persecuting powers will soon be overthrown. In other words, this apocalypse and its authorial claim function in a way similar to the canonical apocalypses of Daniel and Revelation. Knight's view, however, may rely too much on his understanding of how apocalypses work in general; there is less to commend it from the specifics provided by this text in particular. Persecution may be part of the picture, in that the deaths of both Jesus and Isaiah figure prominently. But it is certainly not the entire picture. The bigger picture involves the revelation of heavenly secrets that make sense of earthly realities, and not just the realities of suffering. Also at stake are the reality of the incarnation, the hidden identity of Jesus, his rejection on earth, and the apostasy that arose in the wake of his departure. At its heart, this apocalypse is deeply concerned with theology.

The Theological Dimensions of the Text

The theological views of the text have long puzzled interpreters. Its view of

Christ is often described as “naïvely docetic,” in that Christ is said to have come to earth in the “likeness” of a human, after transforming his appearance at will through the heavenly realms (3.13). He was born after Mary was pregnant for just two months (11.13); and he nursed not because he needed nourishment but simply to avoid being recognized for who he really was (11.17). Darrell Hannah has shown, however, that the account is not thoroughly docetic. Christ really suffers torment, is crucified, and dies, before being raised from the dead.[28]

So too the account is clearly Trinitarian but not especially nuanced: “And there they all named the primal Father and his Beloved, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, all with one voice” (8.18). Moreover, both the Beloved and the Holy Spirit are worshiped (9.40). At the same time they flank the throne of God, presumably as subordinates, and only the Holy Spirit, not the Beloved, is described as an angel (9.40). Instead, the Beloved assumes the appearance of an angel only as it suits his purposes during his descent. In Hannah’s convincing explication, the account is not theologically rigorous, written to promote a refined theological perspective. Nor is it naïvely docetic. It is simply theologically naïve.[29]

One aspect of the theology of the book that merits particular attention is its relationship to Johannine theology known from the writings of the New Testament, with which it shares many features—both with the Gospel of John, where Isaiah is said to have seen the glories of heaven (John 12:41), and with the book of Revelation, where another seer is granted a vision of the divine realm. At the same time the author of the Ascension stands at clear odds with some of the views of the Fourth Gospel. John maintains that no one has ascended to heaven except the one who has previously descended, that is Christ, the Son of Man (John 3:13). Not so for the Ascension, where the prophet of old ascended to the highest realm. Moreover, according to John, Isaiah had a vision of the pre-incarnate Christ in the realm of glory (12:41), since indeed, no human has ever seen God the Father, except Christ himself (John 6:46; see also 1:18, 5:37; 1 John 4:12, 20). The Ascension stresses, on the other hand, that Isaiah saw not just Christ on his throne, but God the Father himself (9.39).[30] It is possible, as Robert Hall has argued, that there is some competition among the communities behind these two literary productions, although it may be going too far to suggest that we can know the inner workings of these groups.[31]

The commonalities and differences between the Johannine community and the author of the Ascension of Isaiah may suggest that they were in direct contact with one another at points of their history. Their different perspectives do not require completely separate historical developments. It should always be

remembered that the secessionists shared a history with but rejected the theology of the community behind the Johannine epistles. Something similar can be said of the book of Revelation, with its many ties to the fourth Gospel but its radically divergent eschatology. The traditions behind Ascension of Isaiah as well may have been forged in connection with the views behind the Gospel of John, but developed in different directions.

The Anti-Jewish Emphasis of the Text

On one point, however, the two books appear in close proximity: their views of Jews and Judaism. For both, Judaism is the God-given, true religion; but the Jews are maligned as the enemies of God. I do not need to make that case for the Fourth Gospel in this context, with its affirmation of Jewish Scripture and, say, festivals, and its simultaneous assault on "the Jews," children of the Devil (ch. 8). But it is important to consider how these views play out in the Ascension of Isaiah. Here, even though polemic is not the driving force of either the Martyrdom or the Vision, there is ample opposition to Jews throughout, with the implicit claim that Jews have forsaken their own religion. That appears to be the reason the great Hebrew prophet Isaiah is chosen as the subject and, indeed, pseudepigraphic presence, in the book; he testifies to the truth, and his views are rejected (much like John 1:11; "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him").

Thus we are told that Beliar caused "many in Jerusalem and in Judah" to "depart from the true faith" (1.9) and there is reference to the great "apostasy of Israel" under Manasseh (2.1–6). In 3.1 "Belchira … appeared as a false prophet in Jerusalem, and many in Jerusalem joined with him." The prophet Isaiah is martyred because of his vision of Christ (3.13, 5.15) and the Jewish leaders and people look on in approbation (5.12). Christ too is opposed by the people of Israel: "The adversary envied him and roused the children of Israel against him. … They delivered him to the king and crucified him" (11.19; note that here, as in the Gospel of Peter, it is the Jews who kill Jesus). There are parallels between the deaths of Isaiah and Christ: the former is executed because of his vision of the latter; both suffer at the hands of the people of Jerusalem inspired by Beliar; the death of both involve tree imagery (crucified on a tree; sawed in half by a treesaw). It should be emphasized that all these things were predicted in advance, not only by the prophet Isaiah but also in all the Psalms and prophets (4.21). The Jews, in other words, should have known.

In addition to these individual passages, it is important to consider the overall

thrust of the book, as Greg Carey has done in an important article.[32] Carey's thesis is that the book as a whole embodies a kind of anti-Jewish polemic: "Its narrative rhetoric argues that a prominent Hebrew prophet such as Isaiah knew the pattern of Christian proclamation centuries in advance, that his knowledge was rejected in Jerusalem, and that Isaiah's martyrdom resulted from his proclamation of the Beloved."[33] As Carey observes, Christian authors of the second and third century commonly used the book of Isaiah in order to promote their anti-Jewish agenda. The Epistle of Barnabas uses Isaiah to advance his view of Christian supersessionism (14:5–8, quoting Isa. 42:6–7, 49:6–7). Justin uses Isaiah to show how Jews have falsely rejected the virgin birth and shown their own hardheadedness (Dialogue 43; 66–67, 77–78, 84). Origen uses Isaiah to very similar ends in the *Contra Celsum* (1.28–29, 32–38), stressing Isaiah's message that the proclamation will be taken, then, to the gentiles (2:78, citing Isa. 65:1; 1:53 citing Isa. 42:4).

And so, at the time of the writing of the Ascension, Christians in other contexts were engaged in anti-Jewish polemic and using the prophecies of Isaiah to accomplish these ends. As we will see in Chapter Twelve, an attack on Jews is not the only emphasis of the Ascension—or even its only polemical thrust—but it is certainly one of them. As Carey summarizes: "Despite its Christological and visionary emphases, the apocalypse's entire narrative structure communicates an apologetic against non-Christian Jews."[34]

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

We have already considered the Coptic Gospel of Thomas with respect to its rejection of an apocalyptic eschatology, and there is no need here to repeat my introductory comments on the book as a whole.[35] One other area of obvious polemic in the book involves the sayings that discuss Jews and the Jewish religion. Here there is a fairly specific orientation: the relevant logia may vary in their harshness, but they uniformly demean both Jewish cultic practices and the Jewish people.

Saying 6

This is the first saying in the collection that broaches the issue of Jewish acts of piety, as the disciples ask Jesus about how they are to be practiced: "Do you want us to fast? And how should we pray? Should we give alms? And what kind of diet should we observe?"[36] One immediately thinks of the Sermon on the

Mount, where Jesus deals with some of these issues; but as DeConick has pointed out the order is reversed in Matt. 6:1–8 (alms, prayer, fasting), so there is probably not any literary dependence.[37] What is most striking is that the Jesus of Thomas does not seem to answer the disciples' questions—or at least the answer is delayed until saying 14. So close are the two logia that some scholars have argued that they were originally a unity separated in the course of transmission, either because a page came to be displaced (the question appeared on the bottom of the page and the answer at the top of the next, but another page came to be intercalated between the two),[38] or because of a fluke at the oral stage of the tradition in a recitation of the sayings of Jesus.[39]

Even taken as an integrated saying, as it stands, logion 6 appears to disdain these acts of piety—which are to be understood as Jewish, not simply human (see saying 14 and its appeal to kashrut).[40] Jesus' reply vitiates the need to fast, pray, and give alms, that is, to engage in external acts of Jewish piety. Instead, one is to be truthful and to observe the negative golden rule. It is personal behavior that matters before God, not Jewish religious customs and laws: "For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing that is covered will remain undisclosed." Acts of Jewish piety are therefore irrelevant at best.

Saying 14

If, as it seems, the response of saying 14 is to be taken with the questions of saying 6, then acts of Jewish piety are not merely irrelevant; they are harmful: "Jesus said to them, 'If you fast, you will bring sin upon yourselves; and if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits.'" The next part of Jesus' response may seem, at first, irrelevant to these conditional clauses and their condemnations, but in fact it may be the key to understanding them. Jesus moves into the question of food, specifically whether those engaged in the Christian mission should try to observe kosher food laws. He answers with a resounding no:

> And when you go into any land and walk in the countryside, if they receive you, eat whatever they place before you and heal the sick among them. For whatever goes into your mouth will not defile you; rather, it is what comes out of your mouth that will defile you.

The concerns of missionaries are not food regulations. They are instead the

welfare of other people ("heal the sick") and proper speech. What one eats is not what defiles a person, but the speech that comes from the mouth. The Christian missionary proclamation is to have precedence over kosher concerns. Is this the original context for the denigration of the other pious activities at the opening of the logion? Acts of Jewish piety are far less important than the mission. A similar concern, with a similar perspective, is found elsewhere in the Jesus tradition, especially Luke 10:8–9. There, however, Jesus speaks of entering a different "town" whereas here he speaks of entering a different "land." The mission has expanded since the logion preserved in Luke, and naturally it is harder to find kosher food in foreign lands than in the various towns of Israel.

The stress on "what comes out of your mouth" may have a deeper meaning in the context of the Gospel of Thomas. This is a Gospel that is all about discourse. It consists exclusively of sayings of Jesus, sometimes set in dialogic context; and it is the "interpretation of these sayings" that provides eternal life (saying 1). Teachings are of ultimate importance for this author, and presumably for his community. As Valantasis puts it, "The search for the interpretation of the sayings takes precedence over the traditional pious practices."[41] But the matter can be expressed even more firmly. Traditional practices are not only bypassed by the need to read, interpret, and teach; engaging in these earlier practices is seriously detrimental, leading to sin, condemnation, and spiritual damage. This is a new religion that displaces the old and declares it harmful.[42]

Saying 27

It is clear that saying 27 must relate to the preceding two in its condemnation of cultic practices. But how does it do so? On the surface it seems to embrace what they spurn, by claiming that one will not "find the kingdom" if one does not "fast from the world," and will not "see the Father" if one does not "make the Sabbath a Sabbath." Does this not require Jesus' followers to practice acts of Jewish piety: fasting and Sabbath observance?

It is worth noting that fasting here is not said to involve abstention from food (the normal meaning of the word, not just in Jewish piety), but from the world. As such, the saying appears to embrace a broader ethic than a periodic religious fast: it means abstaining from the pleasures and activities of life in order to obtain the kingdom of God. Rather than pushing for a Jewish ritual practice it is urging a more rigorously ascetic lifestyle, a disengagement from life.

A variety of interpretations have been proffered for the enigmatic injunction to "make the Sabbath a Sabbath." It could mean, for example, that one should

truly observe the Sabbath (make it a *real* Sabbath); alternatively, it could be playing on the term *rest*, and be saying that one should rest from taking a day of rest—that is, precisely, *not* observe the Sabbath.[43] The latter interpretation would coincide well with both the first part of the saying and with sayings 6 and 14, and so is probably to be preferred.

Another option has been proposed by Peter Nagel, who points out that the words used for "Sabbath" are given variant spellings in the surviving Coptic text (SAMBATON and SABBATON). This leads him to suggest two meanings for them: in one instance Sabbath refers to the day of the Sabbath, and in the other it means "week" (as in Luke 18:12; Mark 16:9).[44] This leads to a possible reconceptualization of the saying, as spelled out in the expansive translation/interpretation of Plisch:

> If you do not refrain from the world
> (and not only from a part of it, as certain food, etc.)
> You will not find the kingdom;
> If you do not observe the (entire) week as Sabbath
> (instead of only some "holy days")
> You will not see the father.[45]

In this rendering, it is important for the Christian to enter into repose permanently, not just temporarily. In that sense, once again, Jewish practices are superseded and no longer in force. They are, in fact, harmful. Jewish language, then, is being used to oppose Jewish religious practice.

Saying 39

This saying presents a direct polemic against Jewish Pharisees and scribes. They know how to enter into God's Kingdom and can provide this knowledge for others, but they have refused to do so. They "have taken the keys of knowledge and hidden them. They have neither entered nor let those wishing to enter do so." And so the Jewish leaders have not only condemned themselves before God, they have brought about the condemnation of other people.

The polemic is comparable to what one finds in the New Testament, especially in the famous set of "woes" found in Matthew 23. The saying itself appears to be a conflation of tradition otherwise known from Matt. 23:13 and Luke 11:52. The obvious contrast in the Gospel of Thomas is with Jesus himself, who not only has the keys of knowledge but reveals the divine secrets, the

correct interpretation of which can bring eternal life (saying 1).

Saying 40

This brief saying may not be directed against Jews and Judaism per se, but against anyone who is not rooted in God: "A grapevine has been planted outside of the Father. And since it is not strong, it will be pulled up by its root and perish." Plisch takes it as a reference to people in general who do not find the source of their sustenance in the Father.[46] So too Valantasis understands the saying as polemical, but simply directed against "another religious community."[47] But it should not be overlooked in this connection that the Hebrew Bible sometimes portrays Israel as a grapevine or vineyard, occasionally with negative implications about its viability (Ps. 80:9–10; Isa. 5:1–7; Jer. 2:21). Read in light of these passages, the saying does not provide an aphoristic truth claim about "any" grapevine that happens to be "planted outside of the Father." Instead it makes a statement of fact, that a grapevine "has been planted outside the father." This specific grapevine is weak, and will be destroyed. It is hard not to take the saying as directed against historical Israel, to be destroyed because it is not located within the sphere of the true God.

Saying 43

This saying is surprising in several ways. For one thing, it begins with a challenge from the disciples to Jesus, which stands at odds with the normal Thomasine portrayal of the disciples as obedient, if sometimes slow, students of the master: "Who are you to say these things to us?" Jesus' frank reply is damning especially in the broader context of the Gospel of Thomas: his disciples do not understand who he is, despite his teachings. Since it is only through understanding Jesus' teachings that one can have eternal life, the consequences of their ignorance—and the challenge of his authority—are rather stark.

But Jesus castigates them even further, likening them to "Jews": "Rather, you have become like the Jews; for they love the tree but hate its fruit; and they love the fruit but hate the tree." This is surely a negative characterization in which the disciples are damned by association. But is there a specific meaning to "fruit" and "tree" in this context? Valantasis thinks there is, but gives a rather palliative interpretation. The tree represents Judaism and the fruit represents Christian faith: "The saying suggests that it is futile to differentiate such tree and fruit, loving one and hating the other. Even with animosity between the sibling

religions, the mutuality and correlativity of the two traditions coexist inseparably."[48] Surely the negative characterization of Jews and Judaism elsewhere in the text, however, does not favor an interpretation endorsing mutual love and respect. DeConick's view is better. The disciples are like the Jews who are unable to decide whether to love the tree or the fruit: "This is the voice of a community which is in the process of separating itself from its Jewish roots."[49]

At the same time, the saying is more than that. The Jews are portrayed negatively here, as those who cannot decide what to love and what to hate. The supposed followers of Jesus who cannot understand him are like that: without knowledge—the correct understanding of his teachings—they do not know what to think; and if they do not know what to think, they will never inherit eternal life. Like the Jews.

Saying 52

In this saying the disciples exclaim that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish prophets, only to earn his rebuke for listening to dead voices rather than the voice of the living: "His disciples said to him, 'Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel, and they all spoke about you.' He said to them, 'You have abandoned the one who lives in your presence and have spoken of the dead.'"

There has been considerable speculation concerning who the twenty-four prophets of Israel were. They are probably best understood as the books of the entire Hebrew Bible, as in 2 Esdras 14:45, where Ezra is instructed to publish all the Scriptures he has inscribed: "The Most High spoke to me, saying, 'Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them.'" For many early Christians, Jesus came in fulfillment of Scripture, and Scripture provided testimony to who he is; Judaism is thus the forerunner of Christianity that prepared the way for Christ. For the Jesus of the Gospel of Thomas, on the other hand, the Hebrew Bible is dead and defunct, and the religion it supports is of no value. It is not the Old Testament that is to be studied, but the sayings of the living Jesus.[50]

Saying 53

Following the rejection of ancient Israel and its scriptures in saying 52, saying 53 makes a direct attack on the Jewish practice of circumcision, comparable to the attack on other aspects of Jewish cultic life in saying 14. When the disciples ask whether circumcision is beneficial, Jesus delivers a stark reply: "If it were

beneficial, their father would beget them already circumcised from their mother. But true circumcision in the spirit has become entirely profitable." It is important to note that Jesus does not simply express the superiority of spiritual over physical circumcision, as the saying could easily be misread. The final clause does indeed indicate that spiritual circumcision is beneficial, as found in texts of the Hebrew Bible (Jer. 4:4) and other early Christian writings, including those associated with Paul (Rom. 2:25–29, 3:1–2; Phil. 3:3). But in this case the superiority of spiritual circumcision is coupled with a complete rejection of physical circumcision, which is of no value at all. This is a vivid contrast with Paul's own view (Rom. 3:1–2), that circumcision is valuable "much and in every way." For this author, circumcision is of no value whatsoever; otherwise, boys would be born circumcised. Since they are not, circumcision does not come from God.

This denigration of circumcision is at the same time a denigration of what it means to be Jewish. Rather than representing the sign of the covenant made between God and his people, circumcision is to be rejected as of no religious value. To this extent the Jesus of Thomas embraces a view found in other anti-Jewish writings, such as Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* 19.3: "As I already explained … it is because circumcision is not essential for all men, but only for you Jews, to mark you off for the suffering you now so deservedly endure."[51]

THE DIDASCALIA APOSTOLORUM

The so-called church orders include such books as the Epistula Clementis (although as earlier noted, it is not usually included in the group), the Didache, the Apostolic Tradition, the Apostolic Church Order, the Didascalia Apostolorum, and the Apostolic Constitutions. There is some question over whether it is appropriate to consider these books, and others like them, as a coherent genre, but in any case they do tend to discuss a range of topics related to the administration of the church (not all topics are found in each book): church organization, ethical and to some extent doctrinal instruction; the appointment of church officers; the duties of each office; church discipline; and instructions for liturgical acts such as baptism, eucharist, and ordination. The Didascalia Apostolorum is notable within the group for its strong anti-Jewish slant. It was allegedly written by the twelve apostles after the death of Jesus, but like the Epistula Clementis and the Apostolic Constitutions (which takes it over virtually wholesale), it too is forged. For those who wanted an authoritative account of the church—its offices, organization, beliefs, ethics, and so on—no

better option existed than a book of instructions from the apostolic band itself.

The Didascalia was originally written in Greek, but is now preserved completely in Syriac, with extensive portions in Latin. Traditionally it is dated to the early third century, although the most recent study of Alistair Stewart-Sykes places its final composition in the early fourth century.[52] It was first published in 1856 by Lagarde from a single Syriac manuscript. One of the great scholars and translators of the work, R. H. Connolly, considered it to be a unified text,[53] a view that held sway for most of the twentieth century, up to the more recent investigations of Paul Bradshaw and now, most notably, Stewart-Sykes.[54] Whatever one makes of the integrity of the text, the author(s) were clearly dependent on earlier traditions that have been incorporated into the work. In its final form, the book presents the "teaching" of the twelve disciples. Unlike some of the other church orders, there is no detailed instruction on liturgical practices; and, as we will see, large portions of the book are neither (directly) polemical nor written in the first person. Among the topics it addresses are sin and its consequences, penance, bishops and how they should judge and forgive, the need to support bishops and honor all the clergy, the settlement of disputes, the role of widows and deaconesses, the Christian relation to the Jewish Law (this is where the book becomes polemical, and where the author most frequently reverts to first-person discourse), and the related theme of heresy.

The most recent, detailed, and somewhat convoluted source-redaction analysis of the work comes in the new translation and introduction of Stewart-Sykes. In addition to two major sources underlying the bulk of the instruction, Stewart-Sykes claims that there were two later redactors. He labels one the "deuterotic," because he opposed the "secondary legislation," that is, the Jewish Law given by Moses as a punishment to the Jews for their idolatry, after he delivered the true Law of God, the Decalogue. The other redactor is called the "apostolic" because it was he who inserted the first-person authorial claims in the names of the apostles. If this view is right, then the final product that circulated in the manuscript tradition is what I have called a "redactional forgery." The older sources and their combination into the bulk of the text were written anonymously; but by redacting the piece in the names of the apostles, sometimes narrated in the first person, the apostolic redactor has made not only his occasional additions but also the redacted whole a forgery.

The jury is still out on Stewart-Sykes's complicated redactional analysis of the work. But it is clear that some redaction, at least, has taken place, in many instances awkwardly, as there are serious editorial seams in the work that become evident upon a close reading.[55] In particular Stewart-Sykes makes a

good point about the apostolic redactor: the topics addressed in the first person tend, as a whole, not to be those of the rest of the book, and in these passages the tone turns polemical, just when authorization for certain views becomes especially important. As we will see more fully, the apostolic first-person narrator inserts himself only rarely in the early chapters of the book (e.g., Matthew in 2.39.1)[56]; by the end of the book, however, the device becomes common. And it is not difficult to identify the first-person narrator's overarching concerns. It is in the context of heresies and schisms that the first person becomes prominent, especially in discussions of the secondary legislation. The fundamental aim of this part of the text is "to dissuade Christians from keeping the Jewish Law."[57]

One may well wonder why the redactor did not edit his work more exhaustively by setting up a pseudepigraphic frame at the outset. G. Schöllgen—writing well before Stewart-Sykes's complex source-redaction analysis but anticipating it in at least one key point—gives a compelling explanation:

> A possible, indeed perhaps the most plausible, explanation for the limited presence of the frame in the first third appears to me to be the assumption that the Didascalia was originally not conceptualized as an apostolic writing and sought to proceed only by means of extensive argumentation from Scripture against problems in communal practice.[58]

The Authorial Claims of the Text

The issue of authority—a matter of concern for all the church orders—is clear at the outset of the book, even without the first-person narrator. The Didascalia is written "from the command of the Savior" (1). The later pseudepigraphic references, then, when they do start to appear, make that "command" all the more plausible. This teaching comes from Christ through the apostles. Still, the most peculiar feature of the authorial claims of the Didascalia is precisely their uneven spread.[59] The unidentified narrator at the beginning of the book continues until 2.14.9, where suddenly the author speaks in the first-person plural in reference to Judas Iscariot praying with "us" but doing "us" no harm.[60] Obviously one is to take the first person to be the other eleven disciples, but nothing more is said about the matter at this point.

As one moves through the book, first-person references begin to appear, more or less out of the blue, without any self-identification and without pushing any obvious ideological or theological agenda (2.6.16, 2.7.1, 2.8.1, 2.52.3, 3.9.2,

4.9.2). At other times it is clear that the apostles are the "we,"—as in the recollection of Jesus' washing the disciples' feet in 3.13.4–5. The first occurrence of a first-person singular narrative is 2.39.1, "I Matthew." In this instance the reference is occasioned by the mention of "tax collectors" in the previous paragraph; but it is probably significant that this is also the first context in which "false brothers" are discussed.

It is not until the final third of the book that the first-person narration becomes prominent. When looked at as a whole, the alternations between first and third persons are awkward. For example, even though, in the final product, this is the apostles talking, they sometimes talk about themselves in the third person, as in 2.20.1, "for to the bishop it was said through the apostles."[61] Or in 2.26.7, "the presbyters are also to be reckoned to you as a type of the apostles." It seems especially odd for Matthew to speak in the first person in 2.39.1 ("I, Matthew") but then to have the Gospel of Matthew referred to impersonally, "Now in the Gospel of Matthew it is written thus" (5.14.11).

On the other hand, it is perhaps not surprising that once the text moves to discuss doctrinal matters, the basis for correct teaching is not made merely by natural arguments and appeals to Scripture, but by the personal authority of the apostles who were with Jesus, spoke with him, ate with him, and were witnesses to him (5.7.25–26). Doctrine in particular needs special apostolic authorization. So too when the author tries to settle a major controversy over the celebration of Passover, he speaks in the first person in the voice of the apostles who personally participated in the Last Supper (5.14.1–5, 5.17.1). And again, when the matter of heresies and schisms appears, the first-person narrator can appeal to having heard the Lord himself (6.5.1–4). In particular, he stresses that God has departed from "the people" (i.e., the Jews) and moved into "the church" (i.e., the Christian community), and this has happened "by means of ourselves the apostles" (6.5.4). Satan too has come to the church, for example in the person of "Simon the sorcerer," whose encounters with the true representatives of God are narrated in the first person by the apostles, and in particular "I, Peter" (6.9). Most especially, "because the entire church was in danger of falling into heresy, we twelve apostles gathered together as one in Jerusalem to determine what should be done" (6.12.1). They decided that they would write up this "didascalia," so that the entire book, in this final redaction, is understood to be the document that emerged from the Jerusalem conference, convened to attack false teaching (6.13.1).

This claim to apostolic authorization for its teaching had its effect. Epiphanius, for example, held the document to be apostolic (*Panarion*, 70,

10ff.).

Nature of the False Teaching

Stewart-Sykes has a clear vision of the function of the deuterotic redactor: "The fundamental aim of the redactor is to deal with the challenges posed by Jewish Christians."[62] Unlike the earlier works we have studied in this chapter, the opponents here, in other words, are not Jews from outside the church but Christians who insist on still following aspects of the Jewish Law. For the most part, the attack on Judaism is, therefore, indirect; but as we will see, there is also direct polemic against Judaism itself as a false religion. That is why, ultimately, followers of Jesus are not to practice it.

Most of the Didascalia is not polemical in nature. When the polemic does begin to appear, however, it is in relation to the Jewish Law. In an important passage early on (1.4.7–10), the author indicates that the true Law is the "Decalogue and the judgments." What he calls the "deuterosis"—the "secondary legislation"—is the Law given after the incident of the Golden Calf, when Moses returned up the mountain and received all of the Law other than the ten commandments. Christians are to avoid this secondary legislation: "Keep away from all its instructions and commands, so that you do not lead yourself astray and bind yourself and weigh yourself down with ancient bonds which cannot be undone" (1.4.7). Christ came, for this author, in order to fulfill the Law (i.e., the true Law, the Decalogue) and to weaken the bonds of the secondary legislation, making them null and void for his followers.

This early passage is an adumbration of the fuller exposition near the end of the book, 6.15–23. Christians are not to follow the Law that was given in order to punish Jews for their sins: "You who have been converted from the people [i.e., from among the Jews] who believe in God and in our Saviour Jesus Christ should not now be continuing to keep to your former conduct, keeping pointless obligations and purifications, and separations and baptismal lustrations and distinction between foods" (6.15.1).

The temptation to follow the secondary legislation is not limited to converts from Judaism, however, as the author earlier addresses "especially you who are of the gentiles" (5.14.22). And so the problem involves both ethnically Jewish Christians who continue to follow the prescriptions of Torah and gentile Christians who have been convinced, presumably by them, to do so as well. For this author, the true Law of God, which certainly is to be followed, is "simple … pure, and holy." It is the Decalogue, as shown by a curious kind of gematria.

Since it is specifically a “Deca”-logue, it can be represented by the letter iota (the numeral ten); and it is iota that begins the name ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (6.15.2). And so the Decalogue is for the followers of Jesus, and only the Decalogue: “Thus the law is indissoluble, whereas the secondary legislation is transitory. For the law is the Decalogue” (6.15.3–4).

The secondary legislation was given by God out of anger, when the children of Israel committed idolatry in the incident of the Golden Calf: “Then was the Lord angry, and in the heat of his anger, yet in his merciful goodness, he bound them to the secondary legislation as to a heavy load and the hardness of a yoke” (6.16.6). This deuterosis required them to make frequent burnt offerings, to observe strict food laws, purifications, “and much else that is astounding” (6.16.9). Followers of Jesus, however, have been “released from the worship of idols through baptism, as from the secondary legislation. For in the Gospel he renewed and fulfilled and confirmed the Law, and abolished and abrogated the secondary legislation” (6.17.1). That, in fact, is why Christ died: “to redeem us from the bonds of the secondary [legislation]” (5.5.3).

Anyone who continues to try to keep the secondary legislation, therefore, is “guilty of the worship of the calf” (6.18.9); what is more, “if you uphold the secondary legislation you are also asserting the curse against our Saviour. You are ensnared in the bonds and so are guilty of the woe as an enemy of the Lord God” (6.18.10).

It should be clear from the foregoing that the main target of the pseudepigraphic polemic is a form of Jewish Christianity, defined, in this instance, as a Christianity that insists on the ongoing validity of Jewish ritual observances. The author appears to have other opponents in view as well, and indeed he may not have neatly differentiated among them. For one thing, Jews who are not followers of Jesus also come under attack, on grounds that can easily be imagined. They are no better than “pagans [who] go in the morning to worship and serve their idols when they rise from sleep” (2.60.2). They are, in fact, “vainly called Jews” (2.60.3), by resting on the Sabbath they show that they are “idle.” They do not have any faith. Most severely, “they do not confess the murder of Christ, which they brought about through transgressing the law, and so repent and be saved.” They are, then, without “excuse before the Lord God” (2.60.4). Indeed, they “made the Lord angry by not believing in him,” (5.16.1) and they hate the Christians (5.14.23).

The other target of attack is a group of “heretics” whose crimes of unbelief are spoken of in such general terms that it is impossible to know exactly who they were or what they believed. The names Simon and Cleobius (6.8) may be

traditional, picked up, perhaps from 3 Corinthians, which I will discuss in a later chapter. The charges against these heretics may also have been derived from this Pauline forgery, as they are accused of refusing to use the laws and the prophets, of blaspheming God the Almighty, and of not believing in the resurrection (6.10.1)—all charges dealt with not only in 3 Corinthians but throughout the writings of proto-orthodox heresiologists attacking “Gnostics.” At the same time the opponents are said to forbid marriage and the eating of meat, charges commonly associated with overly rigorous encratites (also Gnostics?); yet others insist simply on not eating pork and on getting circumcised—charges involving, now, the secondary legislation (6.10.3–4). It may be that in this instance the author is simply attacking heresy in general, rather than having specific targets in mind. In any event, he claims that the rise of these opponents is what prompted the Jerusalem conference and the writing of this very didascalia (6.12.1), even though, as I have noted, the vast bulk of the instruction has nothing to do with such false teachings.

The author shows a particular awareness of, and irritation toward, other Christian leaders who “come falsely under the name of apostles” (6.13.2), who are evidently having an influence on the churches. One hardly need note the thick irony, in this book that falsely claims to be written by the apostles, actually produced some two centuries after their demise. Who the author has in mind as apostolic impostors is anyone’s guess. If he knew of actual writings celebrating the importance of the Jewish Law for Christians—such as the forged Epistula Petri or the forged Grundschrift lying behind the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies*—then we would be altogether justified in labeling his work a counterforgery in the strong sense. C. Fonrobert, on the other hand, has argued that the immediate occasion for the book was not Christian literary activity but non-Christian Jewish—specifically that the book and its instructions for Christians is a response to rabbis in the process of codifying what became the Mishnah:

> The Didascalia spends so much time arguing about the “second legislation,” and the correct way of reading Scripture, because it recognizes that there are other ways of reading, potentially legitimate or persuasive ways of reading at that, that challenge the sense of Christian identity that the Didascalia itself wants to convey.[63]

At the end of the day it may be impossible to decide this issue. But it bears repeating that the explicit target of the author’s polemics in almost every

instance is false teachers within the Christian community. Only rarely, as we have seen, does he attack non-Christian Jews; instead, his concern is with followers of Jesus who keep the Jewish Law. This may tilt the scale in favor of seeing the context as less a confrontation with local rabbinic activities and more a concern over Judaizing practices within the Christian communities themselves.[64] And as we will see in a later chapter, there are other polemical issues touched upon by the author, again involving internal church dynamics.

THE ACTS OF PILATE

Unlike the other books we have considered in this chapter, the Acts of Pilate was massively popular throughout the Middle Ages. More than five hundred manuscripts still survive in Latin, Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Aramaic, Armenian, and Georgian. The manuscripts in the vernaculars of Europe are even harder to tally. They can be found in Castilian, Catalan, French, Italian, Occitan, Portuguese, German, English, Danish, Dutch, Old Norse, Swedish, Gallic, Irish, Bulgarian, Polish, Old Slavonic, and Czech.[65]

Patristic References to an Acts of Pilate

We appear to have references to an Acts of Pilate before any such book existed. The first occurs in Justin's First Apology, where he indicates, about the passion of Jesus, "That these things really happened, you can ascertain from the Acts of Pontius Pilate" (35.9).[66] Later he states "That Christ did perform such deeds you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate" (48.3). The second reference shows that these "Acts" are not thought of as some kind of official *acta* recording the events of Jesus' trial, but a fuller account of some kind. Historians have always treated both references gingerly. Directly before the first of them, Justin also suggests that his reader can learn about the town of Bethlehem "by consulting the census taken by Quirinius, your first procurator in Judea." Apart from the fact the Quirinius was never a procurator in Judea, there is the problem that the census itself, referred to in Luke 2, was almost certainly Luke's invention (or that of Luke's community or oral source), designed with the express purpose of locating Jesus' actual birth in Bethlehem despite the fact that everyone knew that he came from Nazareth. Justin, in other words, is making things up. There was no census record to consult, and no Acts of Pilate. He may well have simply assumed that they must have existed.

Some decades later Tertullian refers, not to acta, but to correspondence

allegedly sent from Pilate to the emperor Tiberius. Tertullian's first reference does not actually mention Pilate, but indicates that "So Tiberius … hearing from Palestine in Syria information which had revealed the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the Senate, with previous indication of his own approval" (*Apol*. 5.2). Here again we are dealing with an obvious fiction, both with respect to Tiberius' attempt to obtain the senate's approbation of Jesus' divine status and to his receipt "from Palestine" of correspondence to that effect. The second reference clarifies that the alleged correspondence came from Pilate: "All these facts about Christ were reported to Tiberius, the reigning emperor, by Pilate who was by now a Christian himself, as far as his conscience was concerned" (*Apol*. 21.24). That Pilate eventually became a Christian was later narrativized in some of the writings of the Pilate cycle. The presence of the tradition in Tertullian's reference to a correspondence does not inspire confidence in the report, which is fully implausible even on its own merits.

A further reference occurs in the "Passion of Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus," three martyrs during the Great Persecution of 304 CE. Here it is not a Christian but a pagan governor, Maximus, who confronts the accused with the existence of an Acts of Pilate: "Nonsense! Don't you know that he whom you invoke is an evil man who was hanged on a cross under the authority of a governor named Pilate, whose Acts are still preserved?"[67] In this case there is reason to think that the governor—whether a fictional character speaking for the author/narrator or a real person—was referring to an actual, existing document. For we have solid evidence that there did indeed at one time exist a pagan version of the Acts of Pilate, propagated in the context of Christian persecution at the beginning of the fourth century.

The evidence comes from Eusebius, who both mentions the document and exposes it as a nonhistorical fabrication. In speaking of the activities of pagan priests under the persecuting zeal of the emperor Maximin Daia, he indicates that they forged an Acts of Pilate as part of their strategy in attacking the Christians: (*H.E*. 9.5) "They actually forged *Memoranda* of Pilate and our Savior (πλασάμενοι δῆτα Πιλάτου καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ὑπομνήματα), full of every kind of blasphemy against Christ."[68] He goes on to speak of the distribution of the book:

> These, with the approval of their superior, they sent to every district under his command, announcing in edicts that they were to be publicly displayed in every place, whether hamlet or city, for all to see, and that they should be given to children by their teachers instead of lessons, to study and learn by heart.

Stephen Mitchell has pointed out the strategic significance of the emperor's decision to make the text available not simply in the major urban areas of the empire, but also in more remote rural places: "Official persecution hitherto … had made little impression on the countryside of much of the empire. Retreat to the chora was a natural and effective response of threatened Christians, if they had the means and opportunity to do so."[69] By spreading propaganda against the Christians into the countryside, Maximin was able to compromise the traditional safe havens of the Christian elite who could escape the cities for areas with other overriding concerns.

Eusebius had access to this fabricated account and had no difficulty exposing it as historically worthless. Its narrative—if that's what it was—was set in the fourth consulship of Tiberius, that is, in the seventh year of his reign. But Josephus, as Eusebius points out, indicates that Pilate was not made governor of Judea until the twelfth year of Tiberius' rule: "This clearly proves the forged character of the *Memoranda* so recently published, blackening our Saviour; at the very start the note of time proves the dishonesty of the forgers" (*H.E.* 1.9).

We no longer have this fabricated pagan Acts of Pilate and can only guess at what it contained. Z. Izydorczyk suggests that since the audience included the general populace and school children learning how to read, the account may have been very basic indeed: "possibly a list of charges against Jesus and some account of the trial."[70]

The Christian Acts of Pilate

Our first certain reference to a Christian "Acts of Pilate" comes over a half century after Eusebius, in the writings of Epiphanius (377 CE). While attacking the Quartodecimans in chapter 50 of his *Panarion*, Epiphanius indicates that they based their celebration of Easter on the eighth day before the calends of April (March 25) on the dating provided in the "Acts accomplished under Pontius Pilate." Epiphanius challenges this dating because he has seen multiple manuscripts of the work with textual variation at just this point; the date is therefore not secure. Among other things this reference shows that the Christian Acts of Pilate was in wide circulation by the 370s; it was in use among Quartodecimans; and Epiphanius had seen it in numerous manuscript copies, which he was able to collate at a key point. Ten years later, from 387 CE, we have an Easter Homily actually written by a Quartodeciman, who does just what Epiphanius claimed the group did, arguing for the date of Easter based on the "Acts Done Under Pilate."[71]

There are reasons for thinking that the Christian version cannot have been written *before* the fourth century, despite the rather quirky claim of F. Scheidweiler that it was available already in the second Christian century.[72] For one thing, if such a document were in circulation, surely Eusebius would have known about it, and would have delighted in exposing the pagan version as a fabrication based on the "true" account of Pilate's role in and attitude toward Jesus' crucifixion. Moreover, Gounelle and Izydorczyk give material reasons for thinking that the Christian version as it has come down to us is most plausibly placed in the fourth century. In their judgment, the superior royalty of Christ makes best sense once Christianity had become a legitimate religion.[73] Moreover, the oath that Pilate takes before the sun (3.1; see also 12.1) reflects a practice otherwise not known before the fourth century.[74]

Given what can be established about the dates of the two respective Acts of Pilate, it has been widely argued that the Christian version was written to counter the claims of the pagan, which appeared some years earlier. Representative of this view are G. W. H. Lampe ("If this was the purpose of Maximin's publication, it is tempting to think that the Christian *Acts of Pilate* may have been composed as a counter-blast to it"[75]) and Z. Izydorczyk ("One suspects, admittedly on circumstantial evidence, that the AP known to us remain in some relation to those circulated under Maximin. Possibly, they were a Christian response to the polemics against Christianity evoked by Eusebius"[76]). If this view is correct, then in the surviving Acts of Pilate we have another instance of a counterforgery.

Given its extensive attestation, in many languages over many centuries, the text of this work is highly unstable, even to the extent that it has been known under a variety of names. Eventually it was most widely called the Gospel of Nicodemus, since, as we will see in a moment, it claims actually to have been written by Nicodemus himself (which is why it is a forgery). But the thorough investigations of Gounelle and Izydorczyk have shown that some variation on the title "Acts of What Happened to Our Savior Jesus Christ Under Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea" lay at the base of all the early versions of the text in Latin and the oriental languages, apart from the Slavonic, and is used in fifteen of our oldest manuscripts in the Greek tradition (starting in the twelfth century). In their view, the earliest form of the book was probably entitled "The Acts Accomplished Under Pontius Pilate." The famous account of the Descent to Hell, found in Tischendorf's B text of the Gospel, was probably not added until the sixth century. According to Gounelle, the title "Gospel of Nicodemus" became popular only in the twelfth century.[77]

The Acts of Pilate as a Forgery

Despite the earlier form of its title, the Acts of Pilate claims not to be written by Pilate but by the Rabbi Nicodemus, as stated at the outset of the narrative: "Nicodemus related all the things that happened after the crucifixion and suffering of our Lord and delivered them over to the high priests and the other Jews. The same Nicodemus compiled these writings in the Hebrew tongue."[78] The account begins then with a kind of discovery narrative:

> I, Ananias, a member of the procurator's bodyguard, well versed in the law, came to know our Lord Jesus Christ from the divine Scriptures, coming to him by faith and being deemed worthy of holy baptism. I searched out the public records composed at that time, in the days of our master Jesus Christ, which the Jews set down under Pontius Pilate. These public records I found written in Hebrew, and with God's good pleasure I have translated them into Greek, so that all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ might know them. This I did in the seventeenth year of our master, the emperor Flavius Theodotius, the sixth year of Flavius Valentinianus, in the ninth indiction. (424–25 CE)

Despite the claims of the prologue, the book could hardly have been composed, originally, in Hebrew. In one of its early, amusing scenes, Pilate's courier indicates that when in Jerusalem he heard the "children of the Hebrews" crying out their acclamations to Jesus at the triumphal entry. A dispute then arises with the Jewish leaders in Pilate's court over the Greek translation of the Hebrew words the courier heard spoken on the occasion. The Greek explanations given in the text would have made no sense if in fact the scene was not originally composed in Greek (the Hebrew phrasing is itself transliterated and then translated into Greek). The claim to have been written in Hebrew, then, is simply a clumsy verisimilitude.

Even though the document is widely thought to have been a response to the pagan fabrication of an Acts of Pilate, rarely has anyone considered why a narrative of this sort would be appropriate as a counterforgery.[79] Part of the answer may lie in one of the commonly accepted features of the account, its harsh treatment of Jews, especially the Jewish leaders who force Pilate to have Jesus crucified out of jealousy. The centrality of the Jewish leaders is established at the outset of the narrative: "The chief priests and scribes called a meeting of the council—Annas, Caiaphas, Semes, Dathaes, Gamaliel, Judas, Levi,

Nephthalim, Alexander, Jairus, and the other Jews—and they came to Pilate, accusing Jesus of many deeds" (1.1). The willful blindness of these Jewish leaders to Jesus' unique identity not only as the king, a point stressed throughout the account, but also as the son of God, is hammered home time and again, chapter after chapter. It begins with the famous scene of the bowing standards in 1.5–6. When Jesus enters into Pilate's praetorium, the standards—topped with an image of Caesar—held by pagan slaves, bow down in obeisance before him. The Jewish leaders are incensed and accuse the slaves of bowing. Jesus is dismissed, the Jewish leaders get twelve of their own burly men to take the standards, six to each one. Jesus is brought back into the room, and once again the standards bow before him.

For the reader this is clear and certain proof both of Jesus' unique standing before God (even the image of the emperor worships him) and of the Jewish leaders' hardheaded and hardhearted refusal to accept it. They proceed to bring false charges against him, especially that he was "born of fornication" (alluding to the Virgin Birth tradition), and they refuse to heed when reliable witnesses testify to the contrary. Pilate in his confusion asks the witnesses about Jesus' accusers:

> "Why do these people want to kill him?"
> They replied to Pilate, "They are filled with religious zeal, because he heals on the Sabbath."
> Pilate said, "They want to kill him for doing a good deed?"
> They replied, "Yes." (2.6)

The entire trial scene pits Pilate, who wants Jesus released, against the recalcitrant Jewish leaders, who want him crucified. At one point Pilate curses the whole lot of them, not just the leaders: "Your nation is always causing riots, and you oppose those who are your own benefactors." He goes on to narrate how the children of Israel were in constant rebellion against Moses, and even against God himself, despite the miracles done on their behalf. Miracles figure prominently in this account as well, as witnesses whom Jesus has healed come forward, testifying to what he has done. The Jewish leaders remain unmoved and eventually force Pilate's hand.

But Pilate is even more reluctant here than in the (briefer) canonical accounts, repeatedly trying to release Jesus and urging the Jewish leaders to try him themselves. When he finally yields to their insistence, it is not the leaders alone who have accepted responsibility. As in Matthew it is the Jewish people as a

whole who speak the hateful words accepting the responsibility for Jesus' blood. "Pilate said to them, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. You see to it yourselves.' The Jews replied, 'His blood be upon us and our children'" (4.1). Unlike in Matthew, the scene is repeated for good measure, so that "the Jews" make their fateful declaration twice: "Then Pilate took water and washed his hands before the sun and said, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous one. See to it yourselves.' Again the Jews cried out, 'His blood be upon us and our children'" (9.4). As if that were not enough, after Jesus' death the Jewish authorities decide to punish Joseph of Arimathea for providing Jesus a proper burial, and he rebukes them, recalling the earlier scene:

> "Now the one who is uncircumcised in the flesh but circumcised in heart has taken water to wash his hands before the sun, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous one; see to it yourselves!' And you replied to Pilate, 'His blood be upon us and our children.' Now I am afraid that the wrath of the Lord may come upon you and your children, just as you have said." The Jews were deeply embittered when they heard these words and they attacked Joseph, seized him, and locked him in a house with no window, setting guards at the door. (12.1)

Once again, it is not just the leaders who are at fault: it is "the Jews." And yet there are at least a few "Jews" who come off well in the narrative, most notably Joseph of Arimathea himself, who is later awarded a special postresurrection audience with the risen Jesus, and Nicodemus, the stalwart member of the Sanhedrin who desperately tries to have Jesus released rather than executed (ch. 5), and who, then, later, allegedly writes up the entire account. For this author "the Jews" may be a recalcitrant group—especially their leaders—but their problem is less that they were Jewish than that they were not Christian.

How then would this forgery serve to counter the pagan Acts of Pilate in circulation on imperial order some years earlier, in the days of Christian persecution? As we will explore more fully in a later context,[80] from the earliest days of Christian apologetics, followers of Jesus were confronted with an enormous problem in the face of Roman opposition. Their lord had been crucified by the governing authorities. By following a convicted insurrectionist, they were themselves, obviously, antagonistic to the state. It was this known antagonism that led to persecution—not belief in one God, or in Christ's divinity, or anything else. Christians were a political problem and this was obvious on the most basic level: they followed Jesus, crucified under Pontius Pilate for crimes

against the state.

The obvious apologetic solution suggested itself early on to Christians who realized that it was a much better thing to be on the side of the authorities than in opposition to them. If Jesus' death was a miscarriage of justice, yet not because of an incompetent decision by the Roman governor—if Jesus did nothing to deserve his fate and if the governor was, in fact, drawn to him—then his followers too were not interested in opposing the state. In fact, they could support the state and its authorities. But how could one sell that story? The easiest way was to produce a counternarrative that stood opposed not only to history as it was known to have happened but also to the formulations of it that were highly inimical to the Christian cause. The counternarrative is found already in our earliest Gospel, Mark, where it is the Jewish leaders who hand Jesus over to Pilate and insist on his death; it is strengthened in Luke, where Pilate declares Jesus innocent three times; it is strengthened further in Matthew, where Pilate washes his hands of Jesus' blood and hears the crowd respond that they will assume full responsibility themselves (passing it on to their children). Matters go to an even more unlikely extreme in the Gospel of John, where it is the Jewish leaders who actually crucify Jesus, a view attested in still later works such as the Gospel of Peter.

The exoneration of Pilate serves not only an obvious apologetic purpose; it also makes it possible to denigrate the Jews, hated on other grounds, principally for refusing to admit that Jesus really is the messiah. This double purpose is nowhere more evident than in the Christian Acts of Pilate, allegedly written by a good Jewish rabbi who saw Jesus as the true king and Son of God, as opposed to most of the other Jews, who were hardheaded, hardhearted, hateful villains who opposed both the Roman authority embodied in Pontius Pilate and the divine authority embodied in Jesus Christ.

OTHER WORKS IN THE PILATE CYCLE

Among the other works traditionally located in the Pilate cycle are several written in the names of well-known figures connected with the Passion of Jesus: Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, and Joseph of Arimathea (others are anonymous narratives). A number of these may well have been produced toward the end of the period of our concern: the first four Christian centuries. No one thinks that any of them is authentic. They were written by later Christians intent on applying their imaginations to the question of what those connected with Christ might have said about their role in his death and resurrection. In some instances

these authors may have been motivated by rumors that some such writings once existed, as found in the references of Justin and Tertullian previously mentioned, or possibly the later report of Eusebius (based on Tertullian):

> Our Saviour's marvellous resurrection and ascension into heaven were by now everywhere famous, and it had long been customary for provincial governors to report to the holder of the imperial office any change in the local situation, so that he might be aware of all that was going on. The story of the resurrection from the dead of our Saviour Jesus, already the subject of general discussion all over Palestine, was accordingly communicated by Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius. For Pilate knew all about Christ's supernatural deeds, and especially how after death he had risen from the dead and was now generally believed to be a god. It is said that Tiberius referred the report to the senate, which rejected it. The apparent reason was that they had not gone into the matter before, for the old law still held good that no one could be regarded by the Romans as a god unless by vote and decree of the senate; the real reason was that no human decision or commendation was required for the saving teaching of the divine message. (*H.E.* 2.2.1–2)

The Anaphora Pilati

The "Report" of Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius relates the events of Jesus' trial, death, and resurrection from the perspective of the Roman governor, but in much briefer compass than the Acts of Pilate. Like that other account, the Anaphora celebrates Jesus' miraculous character, exculpates Pilate for his death, and inculpates the Jews. It is doubtful that the surviving Report is the one referred to by Tertullian, if in fact he really knew of an actual document (which seems unlikely). As it survives in the manuscript tradition, the Anaphora does not appear to date from a period earlier than the late fourth century.[81]

The first half of the brief account is largely devoted to testimony of Pilate himself to the wondrous deeds Jesus performed during his public ministry, recorded in no small measure to show the blindness of the Jews in rejecting him. And so we are told, the "whole multitude of the Jews" is hardened to these signs, and thus turn Jesus over to Pilate without being able to "convict him of a single crime" (v. 1).[82] His one fault, in their eyes, is "that Jesus accomplished these deeds on the Sabbath." Pilate, on the other hand, sees the truth: "For my part, I

know that the gods we worship have never performed such astounding feats as his" (v. 5).

The Jewish leaders and people are unmoved, however, and to prevent a general rebellion, Pilate orders Jesus crucified. The astounding deeds Jesus had performed while living are surpassed by those that transpire at his death and resurrection, which take up most of the second half of the narrative:

> The light did not cease that entire night, O King, my master. And many of the Jews died, being engulfed and swallowed up in the chasms in that night, so that their bodies could no longer be found. I mean to say that those Jews who spoke against Jesus suffered. But one synagogue was left in Jerusalem, since all the synagogues that opposed Jesus were engulfed. (v. 10)

Presumably it was the synagogue of Jesus' followers that survived destruction. For this account, the nonbelievers received what they deserved for refusing to recognize Jesus as the one sent from God.[83]

The Letter of Pilate to Claudius

The letter allegedly written by Pontius Pilate to the emperor Claudius (!) has survived in several textual forms.[84] A Latin version accompanies the accounts of the Descent to Hades from the B text of the Acts of Pilate. In Greek it is quoted in Pseudo-Marcellus, *The Passion of Peter and Paul*. Yet different forms occur in Armenian and Syriac, and as incorporated in the fifth century *Acts of Peter and Paul* (chs. 40–41), whose anonymous author has probably taken the letter over from an earlier source. This final iteration may represent the apocryphon in its earliest surviving form.

In these Acts the letter is cited in the following context. Years after Jesus' death, we are told, the apostle Simon Peter and the heretic Simon Magus appear before the emperor Nero. When the emperor hears about Christ, he asks Peter how he can learn more about him. Peter tells him to retrieve the letter sent by Pilate years earlier to his predecessor, the emperor Claudius, and to have it read aloud. He does so, and the text of the letter is then reproduced.

It is not clear what to make of the anachronistic reference to Claudius as the emperor at the time of Jesus' death. The forger of the letter, living so long after the fact, may simply not have known the facts of Roman imperial history. It is also possible that the surviving letter was originally said to have been sent to

Tiberius (as in Tertullian and as mentioned in the Anaphora), and that a later editor—conceivably the author of the fifth-century *Acts* that presents the letter—altered the name of the addressee (e.g., to make it refer to Nero's immediate predecessor).[85] In any event, the letter could have been composed any time between Tertullian and the fifth-century *Acts of Peter and Paul*. Scheidweiler and Elliott have suggested that it may have served as the basis for the Anaphora Pilati, in which case it would likely have arisen somewhat earlier in that period.[86]

The themes of the letter resonate with other works in the Pilate cycle. The Jews are totally oblivious to what God has done in sending Christ into the world:

> Pontius Pilate, to Claudius. Greetings. I myself have uncovered what has just now happened. For the Jews, out of envy, have brought vengeance both on themselves and on those who come after them by their terrible acts of judgment. They have been oblivious to the promises given to their ancestors, that God would send them his holy one from heaven, who would naturally enough be called their king; he promised to send this one to earth through a virgin. And now this one has come to Judea, during my governorship.

Despite his many miracles—or to be more accurate, precisely because of his many miracles—the Jewish leaders sought to have Jesus executed:

> They saw that he brought light to the eyes of the blind, that he cleansed lepers, healed paralytics, drove demons out from people, raised the dead, rebuked the winds, walked on the waves of the sea, and did many other miracles; and that all the people of the Jews called him the son of God. For this reason the chief priests were moved by envy to seize him and deliver him over to me; and they told lie upon lie, saying that he was a magician and that he acted contrary to their law.

As a result, Pilate himself is not responsible for Jesus' death; the stiff-necked and godless Jews are. In fact, it is not Pilate who has Jesus crucified in order to placate the Jewish leaders; they do the foul deed themselves: "Since I believed their accusations, I delivered him over to their will, after having him flogged. And they crucified him."

Moreover, after they commit the foul deed, they bribe the guards at the tomb

to say that he was not raised from the dead. And that, indicates Pilate, is the reason for his letter: “In case someone else might lie about it and you be led to believe the false reports told by the Jews.”

A reply of the emperor (Tiberius) to Pilate survives from manuscripts of the later Middle Ages, but as it appears to have been written no earlier than the eleventh century,[87] it is of no concern to us in this context.

The Letter of Herod to Pilate

The letter allegedly written by Herod Antipas to Pilate, found in a fifteenth-century Greek manuscript, is first attested in a Syriac version of about the sixth century. The document may have been forged in the late fourth century.[88] In it, Herod affirms the divine principle that “each will receive his due” for the evil deeds he has done. In his case, Herod’s beheading of John the Baptist has been divinely reciprocated in the grisly death of his stepdaughter, Herodia, who literally loses her head when she is swept away by a flood: her torso is borne downstream but her severed head is left in the grasp of the hands of her mother, who was trying to save her. Herod too is facing God’s judgment: as he writes, “already worms are coming up from my mouth.” Here the author of the letter appears to confuse Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, connected with Jesus’ death, with Herod Agrippa, who according to the book of Acts was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12:23). So too, the soldier Longinus, who stuck a spear in Jesus’ side on the cross, meets a gruesome fate, condemned to be torn apart by a lion every night, only to have his body restored during the day in preparation for another night’s agony, much as Prometheus of Greek myth.

There are clear connections between this text and the Acts of Pilate and the Anaphora Pilati. The Roman governor Pilate is portrayed in a positive light, representing the gentiles who will receive the future kingdom, as opposed to the Jews, represented by Herod, who have been rejected by God. Among its anti-Jewish sentiments is Herod’s condemnation of the Jewish leadership, and with them the entire Jewish people, the one-time “children of light”:

> There is no peace for the priests, says the Lord. Death will soon overtake the priests and the ruling council of the children of Israel, because they unjustly laid hands on the righteous Jesus. These things will be fulfilled in the culmination of the age, so that the Gentiles will become heirs of the kingdom of God, but the children of light will be cast out, because we did not keep the commandments of the Lord nor those of his Son.

The Letter of Pilate to Herod

As a final forgery to be considered from the Pilate cycle, the Letter of Pilate to Herod is principally concerned with showing how Pilate, along with his wife Procla and Longinus, the soldier at the cross, all converted to become followers of Christ after the resurrection.[89] One might expect the letter to have close connections with the one preceding, but apart from the titles and the appearance of some of the same names (Herod, Pilate, Longinus), the letters have almost nothing to do with one another, and in fact stand at odds in their views. Nowhere is this clearer than in their respective accounts of Longinus. In the Letter of Herod, the solder is subject to cruel and eternal torment as an unbeliever; in the Letter of Pilate he converts to become a blessed devotee of Jesus after being confronted by him, personally, after the resurrection. It may be that the two letters were combined in the textual tradition (this one is found in the same Syriac and Greek manuscripts) simply because of their comparable titles.

This letter is also much less ostensibly polemical against the Jews, although an implicit polemic may be found in its historically remarkable claim that Pilate became a Christian convert after the resurrection. This claim may stand at odds with everything that we can know about Pilate, sparse as that is; but it stands very much in line with what some Christians wanted to say about him, in no small measure because it demonstrates yet further his basic sympathy with the cause of Christ. And if Pilate was sympathetic with Christ, who was antipathetic? It was obviously the Jews, culpable for his murder and responsible for the suffering that they have, as a result, brought upon themselves.[90]

THE ABGAR CORRESPONDENCE

The two letters of the Abgar correspondence form part of the larger Abgar legend, recounted by Eusebius (*H.E.* 1.13) and, in a later version, by a fifth-century Syriac work, the *Doctrina Addai*.[91] It may well be, as will be argued below, that the legend was built around the correspondence, which existed independently of it. The legend itself tells of the conversion of Edessa to Christianity after the resurrection through the preaching of Jesus' apostle Thaddeus (Eusebius) or Addai (*Doctrina*). Eusebius claims to have uncovered the story in the archives of Edessa, and to have translated it literally from the Syriac. Sebastian Brock, among others, has argued that both claims are improbable.[92] Where Eusebius actually found the tradition cannot be known. Eventually it came into wide circulation: it is preserved in Greek, Latin, Syriac,

Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, and Slavonic witnesses.

There have been long and hard debates over the legend as a whole in both of its basic iterations, especially over when it came into existence and what its overarching purpose is. The classic views of F. C. Burkitt and of W. Bauer have been superseded in modern times by the intriguing thesis of H. J. W. Drijvers that the legend was generated at the end of the third century among the proto-orthodox minority of Christians in eastern Syria in order to counter the religious claims that the Manichaeans made for Mani, the founder of their religion.[93] In a later chapter I will consider whether the letters themselves may have derived from the context of anti-Manichaean polemic. For now I need say only a few words about the anti-Jewish slant of the correspondence. We can leave the larger legend to one side, as it is not itself a forgery but an anonymous narrative.

The correspondence comprises two letters. The first is a short missive from the king of Edessa, Abgar Uchama ("the Black") to Jesus, acknowledging Jesus' miracle-working powers: "I have heard about you and your healings, which you perform without medications or herbs. As the report indicates, you make the blind see again and the lame walk, you cleanse lepers, you cast out unclean spirits and demons, you heal the chronically sick, and you raise the dead."[94]

Abgar has drawn the appropriate conclusions from the tales he has heard: "Having heard all these things about you, I have concluded one of two things: either you are God and do these things having descended from heaven, or you do them as the Son of God." His principal concern, however, is for his own, unspecified illness. He would like Jesus to come to Edessa to heal him, and at the same time to escape the animosity of the Jews in his homeland: "For I have also heard that the Jews are murmuring against you and wish to harm you." Here then is another piece of anti-Jewish rhetoric that highlights the Jewish animosity toward Jesus (and, presumably, all things Christian).

In his brief reply, Jesus blesses Abgar for "believing without seeing" (an allusion to John 20:29) but informs the king that he cannot come because he needs to fulfill his mission, that is, by being crucified. After his ascension, however, he will send an apostle to heal the king and "provide life both to you and to those who are with you" (that is, to lead them to salvation).

There are various indications that this short correspondence originated independently of the legend of the conversion of Edessa. It can at least be affirmed that it circulated separately[95]: copies of the letter in Greek can be found in two inscriptions at Euchaita in northern Anatolia, on a stone at Philippi in Macedonia, and on a stone at Kirk Magara near Edessa, all dating from the fifth century. Later it can be found in an inscription at Ephesus on a stone over the

door of a house and on a papyrus that was possibly used as an amulet. In addition, according to Judah Segal, “texts of the Abgar-Jesus correspondence are frequent in Coptic, and in many forms—on stone, on parchment, on ostraca, and as amulets on papyrus.”[96]

In addition to the surviving remains themselves, we have the evidence from the pilgrim Egeria that citizens of Edessa in later times considered the correspondence significant for its magical powers, as containing a letter from the Son of God himself (*Peregrinatio Egeriae* 19). It was brought forward in times of war, miraculously scattering the armies laying siege to the city. Eventually a copy of the correspondence was affixed to the city gates to ward off enemies. This miraculous character of the correspondence was based in no small measure on the last line of Jesus’ letter, which is not found in Eusebius’s account, but is present both in the surviving Greek fragments of the letter and in the account found in the *Doctrina Addai*, where Jesus assures Abgar that “Your city will be blessed, and the enemy will no longer prevail over it.” This line itself can still be found in inscriptions, ostraca, and amulets.[97]

It is possible that these various sources for the correspondence extracted it from the fuller legend. It is worth noting, however, that Egeria herself gives no evidence of knowing the fuller legend, but speaks only of the correspondence.[98] Moreover, the letter indicates that Jesus himself will send an apostle to Abgar after his ascension, but the legend indicates that it is Thomas who does so, with no indication of or even allusion to dominical inspiration. It may well be, then, that the legend sprang up around the correspondence in a second stage of the tradition. The tradition itself is internally uneven: the *Doctrina Addai* does not speak of a letter from Jesus, possibly under the influence of the notion that Jesus never wrote anything. Instead, according to the *Doctrina*, he sent an oral reply through a messenger.

Both Augustine and Jerome indicate that Jesus never produced any writings.[99] Other traditions exist, however, indicating that he both was able to write and did write. The best known is the apocryphal Pericope Adulterae that later found its way into manuscripts of the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus is literally said to “write” (καταγράφειν) on the ground (not draw or doodle), a passage that Chris Keith has recently argued was originally designed precisely to show that Jesus was writing-literate.[100] Two other writings allegedly by Jesus survive, the letter that Jesus writes from the cross, addressed to the Cherubim of heaven, in the Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea (although in that case one might suppose the letter was dictated …) and the Second Treatise of the Great Seth from Nag Hammadi, which, however, is allegedly written by the heavenly, not the earthly

Jesus. As a result, the correspondence with Abgar is the only piece of writing allegedly produced by Jesus himself that survives. And appropriately enough, it is in response to a letter forged by the same writer, in the name of the king of Edessa, who is concerned about Jesus' fate at the hands of the recalcitrant Jews, who obviously do not recognize his supernatural character, despite the miraculous signs he performed.

As it turns out, a similar set of themes is played out in a second pair of letters preserved in the Abgar legend, at least in its later iteration in the *Doctrina Addai*. This is a correspondence between Abgar and the emperor Tiberius, allegedly written after Jesus' death. The themes of the correspondence sound very much like what one finds throughout the Pilate cycle. Abgar informs the emperor that the Jews have wrongfully crucified their own messiah: "I write and make known to your powerful and great rulership, that the Jews under your authority who live in Palestine have gathered together and crucified the Messiah who was unworthy of death."[101] They did this despite the fact that Jesus "performed signs and wonders and had showed to them mighty powers and signs." In response, Abgar has wanted to take his armies into Palestine and wipe out the Jews, but he restrains himself out of respect for the emperor.

In his reply, Tiberius indicates that he was already informed about the malevolent actions of the Jews in a letter from Pilate, and that he is now prepared to take legal actions against the culprits: "I am ready whenever I have quiet to make a legal charge against the Jews who have acted unlawfully." Pilate himself has been punished by being "dismissed in disgrace" for his part in the affair, "because he deserted the law and did the will of the Jews, and for their appeasement crucified the Messiah who … should have been honored instead.… It is right that he should have been worshiped by them, particularly since they saw with their own eyes everything which he did."

This forged correspondence presupposes the existence of an exchange between Pilate and Tiberius, as referred to earlier in this chapter. Eusebius himself knows about such an earlier exchange, but shows no knowledge of these letters between Abgar and the emperor. It appears that their forger produced his account sometime in the late fourth, or even the early fifth, century and, like the sundry authors of the writings found in the Pilate cycle, was intent not only on imagining the unimaginable—a Tiberius agonized over the death of the Jewish messiah—but also on imagining it in the harsh anti-Jewish terms of his own day.

1. Among the standard works, see especially Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire 135–425 AD* (New York: Oxford, 1946, French original 1948); Rosemary Ruether,

Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism (New York: Seabury, 1974); and John Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University, 1983). Among the more valuable of the spate of recent literature, see Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004); Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

2. It is tempting to include the book of Hebrews as an instance of a forged polemic against Jews. But even though it does indeed appear to be a forgery, at the end of the day it is difficult to establish its function as primarily, or even covertly, polemical. It is the postscript of 13:22–25 that seems to carry the implicit claim that the author was Paul (even though he certainly was not Paul). Especially striking is v. 23: "You should know that our brother Timothy has been released; I will see you with him if he comes quickly." That the passage was originally part of the letter, see Harry Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* Heremenia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), p. 13 and ad loc. Claire Rothschild in particular has made a lively and impassioned case that the book is meant to be taken as a Pauline letter, by an author living well after Paul's day: "The author of Hebrews composed the postscript in imitation of Paul in order to pass off the text as one of his prison letters.… The author did so, not as an afterthought, but as a way of carrying out the book's original intention. That is, the postscript is a deliberate forgery by an otherwise unknown early Christian author, claiming Paul's authorship for a work he composed to be published as part of an existing *corpus Paulinum*" (*Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon: The History and Significance of the Pauline Attribution of Hebrews*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009, p. 4). Rothschild's argument is that the entire letter—not just the postscript—contains numerous allusions to Paul's own writings, and that it cites an inordinate number of passages of Scripture also cited by Paul. In her judgment the Pauline materials throughout the book do not come to the author from some kind of "common stock" of early Christian traditions. They are intentional allusions to Pauline teachings, given to verify to the readers that the author is Paul.

I am inclined to agree that the letter—especially because of its ending—is written by someone who wants his readers to think he is Paul. At the same time, I do not see the letter as polemical (Rothschild does not contend that it is either). It is true that one of the major concerns of Hebrews is that its readers not (re?)turn to Judaism. And so most of the book is designed to show that Jesus is superior to anything Judaism has to offer (he is greater than the angels, than

Moses, than Joshua, than the high priests, than the sacrifices, and so on). As a result, one might see in this a polemic against Judaism. But in fact the author does not attack Jews or the Judaism of his day; the form of Judaism he discusses is biblical Judaism. Even when he indicates that God "finds fault with them" (8:8), the author is referring to Israelites in the days of Jeremiah, not to Jews in his own time. The Judaism discussed in the book, therefore, is not a contemporary religion subject to polemical attack. And yet more important, it is not an evil to be abrogated. The Jewish religion of biblical times was a good religion, given by God, that has now been transcended.

3. A. Hilgenfeld, "Das Petrus-Evangelium über Leiden und Auferstehung Jesu," *ZWT* 36 (1893): 447; A. Harnack, *Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apocalypse des Petrus* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1893), 37–38.

4. "Justin und das Markusevangelium," *ZNW* 84 (1993): 93–110.

5. *The Gospel of Peter: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 97–99.

6. Foster argues that since the infinitive used before the αὐτοῦ and the infinitive used after the αὐτοῦ both have as the subject Jesus, then the αὐτοῦ must not be changing the person being discussed. There's a certain force to the argument, but it ultimately fails because it overlooks both the closest antecedent for the pronoun and the established usage of Justin in his other references to the Memoirs, not to mention the problems involving the use of an objective genitive with "Memoirs." *Gospel of Peter*, pp. 97–99.

7. Among the similarities between the accounts that Foster writes off ("The Writings of Justin Martyr and the So-Called Gospel of Peter," in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007, 108–9): the use of διασύρω in Justin and σύρω in Gospel of Peter; the use of ἐκάθισαν in both to associate Jesus with a judicial function; and the request for Jesus to judge. These are indeed strong points of contact and cannot be dismissed, as Harnack earlier recognized (*Bruchstücke*, pp. 38–40).

8. Thornton's attempt to refute Pilhofer fails to convince. Rather than dealing with Pilhofer's arguments, for the most part, Thornton makes an argument of his own, that the reference in *Dial*. 106.3 speaks of Jesus "changing" the name of Simon to Peter (not giving him a nickname), and of calling James and John Boanerges. Among our Gospels, these naming events happen only in Mark, so that Justin is referring to Mark as Peter's Memoir. A good deal rests on Thornton's claim that in the other Gospels Simon's name is not actually changed to Peter; for them, Peter is a nickname. But for the Gospel of Peter and Justin, Jesus made a name change. On one hand, the argument fails to take seriously

enough the fact that Simon's name was decidedly *not* permanently changed in Mark, since Jesus calls him "Simon" in 14:37. Moreover, this cannot be an argument that the Gospel of Peter is not being invoked, when the episode is not found in the Akhmim fragment, which provides only portions of the Passion narrative. Thornton's case is driven in fact by a completely different agenda: he wants to establish that by the time of Justin there was already a fourfold Gospel canon in Rome in the midsecond century, decades before its (otherwise) earliest attestation in Irenaeus. By making Peter's Memoir Mark, Thornton can show that all four Gospels are quoted in Justin's work.

9. "Justins 'Denkwürdigkeiten der Apostel' und das Petrusevangelium," in Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, eds., *Das Evangelium nach Petrus: Text, Kontexte, Intertexte*, TU 158 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 197–214. Although Greschat shows that "his memoirs" is not the Gospel of Mark, but the Gospel of Peter, she does not see the need to posit *direct* literary dependence of Justin.

0. *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr* (Leiden: Brill, 1967).

1. E.g., Jerry McCant, "The Gospel of Peter: Docetism Reconsidered," *NTS* 30 (1984): 258–73. See the most recent discussion of Paul Foster, *Gospel of Peter*, pp. 157–65.

2. *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

3. Translations are from Ehrman and Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 371–87.

4. See Foster, *Gospel of Peter*, 169–72. Crossan's early dating of the alleged Cross Gospel has not received much support, although he found one convert in Paul Mirecki, author of the ABD article "Gospel of Peter," vol. 5, pp. 278–81.

5. Cf. Matt. 27:24.

6. "The Gospel of Peter and the Canonical Gospels: Independence, Dependence of Both?" *Forum* 1 (1998): 28. Italics his.

7. *Doketismus*, pp. 78–92.

8. A. Kirk, "The Johannine Jesus in the Gospel of Peter: A Social Memory Approach," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, ed. R. T. Fortna and T. Thatcher (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), pp. 319–21.

9. T. Nicklas, "Die 'Juden' im Petrusevangelium (PCair. 10759). Ein Testfall," *NTS* 47 (2001): 221.

0. Joseph Verheyden, "Some Reflections on Determining the Purpose of the 'Gospel of Peter,'" in Kraus and Nicklas, eds., *Das Evangelium nach Petrus*, p. 299.

1. For an overview, see Jonathan Knight, *Disciples of the Beloved One: The Christology, Social Setting and Theological Context of the Ascension of Isaiah*, JSPSUp 18 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 28–32.

2. Richard Bauckham, “The Ascension of Isaiah: Genre, Unity and Date,” in *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, NovTSup 93 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 363–90.

3. *Il “Martirio di Isaia” non esiste: L’Ascensione di Isaia e le tradizione giudaiche sull’uccisione del profeta* (Bologna: Centro Stampa Baiesi, 1984).

4. E. Norelli, *L’Ascensione di Isaia: Studi su un apocrifo al crocevia dei cristianesimi* (Bologne: Centro editorial dehoniano, 1994).

5. Translations of C. Detlef G. Müller, in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2.

6. See my discussion on pp. 72–74.

7. Knight, *Disciples*.

8. Darrell D. Hannah, “The Ascension of Isaiah and Docetic Christology,” *VC* 53 (1999): 165–96.

9. Darrell D. Hannah, “Ascension,” and Hannah, “Isaiah’s Vision in the Ascension of Isaiah and the Early Church,” *JTS* 50 (1999): 80–101.

10. He appears to be able to see God, but not the “glory” that surrounds him; 9.29, 10.2, 11.24.

11. Robert G. Hall, “The *Ascension of Isaiah*: Community Situation, Date, and Place in Early Christianity,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 289–306. Hall goes beyond what the evidence suggests in reconstructing a number of competing prophet groups in early Christianity; moreover, this set of competitions is probably not the best primary setting for the book. Among other things, Hall appears to overread AscIsa. 3.21–31, seeing it as directed against other groups within Christianity that specifically reject the doctrine of the descent and ascent of the Beloved. As I will argue later, broader issues in the apostasy appear to be involved. The ascent-descent motif does not figure in the passage.

12. “*The Ascension of Isaiah*: An Example of Early Christian Narrative Polemic,” *JSP* 17 (1998): 65–78.

13. Ibid., p. 65. Emphasis his.

14. Ibid., p. 74.

15. See pp. 230–31.

16. All translations of the Gospel of Thomas are drawn from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 303–35.

17. *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 62, with other reasons also adduced.

8. Allowed as a possibility by Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 63.

9. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 87.

0. Contra Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 63.

1. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 80.

2. For further interpretation, see A. Marjanen, “Thomas and Jewish Religious Practices,” in R. Uro, ed., *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 163–82.

3. Both possibilities are suggested by Zlatko Pleše in Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 317, n. 37.

4. “Wenn ihr nicht den Sabbat zum Sabbat macht?” in *Sprachen Mythen, Mythizismen. Festschrift Walter Beltz*, in *Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft* 32 (2001) : 507–17.

5. Uwe-Karsten Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008), pp. 93–94.

6. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 113.

7. Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 116.

8. Ibid., p. 140.

9. *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 165.

0. This stands in precise contrast, for example, with the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1.59, which instead *affirm* the Scriptural prophets precisely because Christ bears witness to them.

1. Translation of Thomas Falls, *The Writings of Justin Martyr* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1948). I do not include a discussion of saying 104, where Jesus again appears to denigrate the Jewish practices of prayer and fasting, because I am convinced by the interpretation of DeConick (*Gospel of Thomas*, p. 282), that since fasting was connected in Jewish texts with atonement and demonic battles, Jesus’ response is simply a claim not to have needed atonement and not to have needed help in spiritual warfare. In her opinion, this saying arose in the Thomasine community before they developed anti-Jewish attitudes and lifestyles.

2. Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *The Didascalia Apostolorum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), p. 54.

3. *Didascalia apostolorum: The Syriac Version translated and accompanied by the Verona Latin fragments, with an introduction and notes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929). See e.g., p. xxxvi.

4. Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University, 2002), p. 93; and Stewart-Sykes, *Didascalia*, passim.

5. As just one example, in the account of the Jerusalem conference discussed in 6.12.3 the author indicates that he is the "apostles" and differentiates himself from "James." But then the author has "I James" speak as if he is one of the twelve and includes himself among the apostolic band: "we, the apostles" (6.12.12, 14).

6. NB: I will not be following the twenty-four chapter divisions of the manuscripts, as these do not allow for easy cross-referencing and checking, but the more refined book-chapter-verse divisions provided by F. X. Funk and retained by Stewart-Sykes.

7. Stewart-Sykes, *Didascalia*, p. 24.

8. "Eine mögliche, vielleicht die plausibelste, Erklärung für die Rahmenabstinenz des ersten Drittels scheint mir die Annahme zu sein, daß die Didaskalie ursprünglich gar nicht als Apostelschrift konzipiert war und lediglich mit Hilfe extensiver Schriftargumentation gegen die Mißstände in der Gemeindepraxis vorgehen wollte." Georg Schöllgen, "Pseudapostolizität und Schriftgebrauch in den ersten Kirchenordnungen. Anmerkungen zur Begründung des frühen Kirchenrechts," in *Stimuli: Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum. Festschrift Für Ernst Dassmann*, ed. George Schöllgen and Clemens Scholten (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1996), p. 115.

9. So also B. Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 55.

0. The author does use a first-person pronoun occasionally before this, e.g., in 1.1.3 ("our" Lord), 1.2.4 ("Let us"), and especially 1.7.17 ("we … you"). But he gives no indication at these points that he is presenting himself as the apostolic band.

1. Throughout I will be using the translation of Stewart-Sykes, *Didascalia*.

2. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, p. 3.

3. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, "The Didascalia Apostolorum: A Mishnah for the Disciples of Jesus," *JECS* 9 (2001): 501–2.

4. At the same time, it is important to affirm Fonrobert's overarching point about Jews and Christians in antiquity, that neither Rabbinic Judaism nor Christianity was a fixed point along a spectrum, and that a document such as the Didascalia cannot neatly be located somewhere along the line between them. There were obviously massive interchanges and nuanced relationships among people who self-identified as Jews and/or Christians, as is becoming increasingly clear among scholars who refuse to think simplistically about the so-called parting of the ways.

5. See Rémi Gounelle and Zbigniew Izydorczyk, *L'Évangile de Nicodème ou Les*

Actes fait sous Ponce Pilate (Belgium: Brepols, 1997); and especially Z. Izydorczyk, *The Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts in Western Europe*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 158 (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1997).

6. Translation from T. Falls, *Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*.

7. My translation of the French from Gounelle and Izydorczyk, *L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 106.

8. Translation of G. A. Williamson, *Eusebius*.

9. Stephen Mitchell, "Maximinus and the Christians in A.D. 312: A New Latin Inscription," *JRS* 78 (1988): 121. For general background on Maximin Daia and his persecution of Christians, see Robert Grant, "The Religion of Maximin Daia," in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 143–66.

0. *Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 24.

1. Gounelle and Izydorczyk draw the obvious conclusion that the Acts of Pilate was in circulation in Asia Minor by no later than the second half of the fourth century. *L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 108.

2. In Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocryphya*, 1.501–4. Scheidweiler's argument is demolished by Jean-Pierre Lémonon, *Pilate et le gouvernement de la Judée: textes et monuments* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1981).

3. *L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 110.

4. Attested otherwise in the Apostolic Constitutions 21.52.1 and the fourth-century *Lives of the Caesars* 39.13 (*L'Évangile de Nicodème*, p. 110).

5. "The Trial of Jesus in the Acta Pilati," in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 176.

6. *Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus*, p. 24.

7. Rémi Grounelle, "Évangile de Nicodème ou Actes de Pilate," in Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2005), pp. 251–59. For a fresh English translation of the A text (chs. 1–16) and parts of the B text (including the Descent to Hell), see Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 419–89.

8. Prologue. Translations taken from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*.

9. For further reflections on its value as a counterforgery, in the context of early Christian apologetics, see pp. 484–85.

0. See ch. 15.

1. See Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 491–99; and Rémi Gounelle,

"Rapport de Pilate, réponse de Tibère à Pilate, comparution de Pilate," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 2, ed. Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestli (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), pp. 303–4, 306–7.

2. Quotations of all works from the Pilate cycle are taken from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*.

3. Another work of the Pilate cycle, the *Paradosis Pilati*, is sometimes, wrongly, taken as a direct response of Tiberius to the Anaphora; it may indeed have been conceived in that way, but it is stylistically different and is almost certainly written by another hand. As it does not claim to be written by Tiberius, but is an anonymous narrative about his reaction to Jesus' crucifixion, it need not concern us further here. See Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 501–9; and Gounelle, "Rapport de Pilate," pp. 301–9.

4. Jean-Daniel Dubois and Rémi Gounelle, "Lettre de Pilate à l'empereur Claude," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 2, ed. Geoltrain and Jean-Kaestli, pp. 357–63.

5. Dubois and Gounelle ("Lettre de Pilate") maintain that the letter was originally composed as part of the Latin "Passion of Peter and Paul," thus explaining its supposed origin from the time of Nero's immediate predecessor.

6. Felix Scheidweiler, "The Gospel of Nicodemus / Acts of Pilate and Christ's Descent into Hell," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Schneemelcher, p. 205.

7. Thus Gounelle. "Rapport de Pilate."

8. See Montague R. James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, second series (Cambridge: University Press, 1897), pp. xlv–xlviii, 66–70; Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 523–27.

9. See Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 517–21.

10. One other interesting document of the Pilate cycle, the Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea, is also forged, but probably after our period; two others, the Mors Pilati and the Vindicta Salvatoris, are anonymous narratives rather than forgeries. Texts and introductions for all three can be found in ibid., pp. 537–85.

11. For Syriac text and English translation, see George Howard, *The Teaching of Addai* (Ann Arbor, MI: Society of Biblical Literature, 1981).

12. Sebastian Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. Harry Attridge and Gohei Hatta (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1992), pp. 212–34.

13. See pp. 455–58. F. C. Burkitt, *Early Christianity outside the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899); Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen:

Mohr/Siebeck, 1934), ch. 1; H. J. W. Drijvers, “Addai und Mani: Christentum und Manichäismus im Dritten Jahrhundert in Syrien,” *Or. Chr. A.* 221 (1983): 171–85. For a recent discussion of how the legend functioned in its later context, see Alexander Mirkovic, *Prelude to Constantine: The Abgar Tradition in Early Christianity* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004).

4. Translations from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 413–17.

5. For the following epigraphic and manuscript notes, see Judah Segal, *Edessa, the “Blessed City”* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 75.

6. Ibid., p. 75. For discussion of papyrus fragments later discovered in Egypt, see Rolf Peppermüller, “Griechische Papyrusfragmente der *Doctrina Addai*,” *VC* 25 (1971): 289–301.

7. Thus Drijvers.

8. The only factum that she mentions not in the letters themselves is that the letter of Jesus was brought to Edessa by Ananias; but this is also found in the superscript to the letter.

9. Augustine, *Faust*. 28.4; *Cons*. 1.7.11; Jerome, *Comm. Ezech*. 44.29 (PL 25.443).

0. *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009).

1. Translation of Howard, *Teaching of Addai*.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Forgeries Involving Church Organization and Leadership

From the earliest of times, Christian churches of every description encountered difficulties of organization and leadership. From the early years of the movement we are best informed about the churches connected with Paul, where problems arose that could make even the most stalwart apostle tremble. Nowhere is that clearer than in the Corinthian correspondence, directed to a community organized (if one can use the term) according to a charismatic principle that enabled considerable chaos to reign not only in the worship services but also in the life of the community in general, especially in competing factions and their outspoken representatives. Within such communities factionalism often played itself out in the realm of theological discourse, as subcommunities and individuals advocated views of the faith in opposition to the rest. Small wonder that the church as a whole could not continue to structure itself along such lines, that hierarchical organization and established leadership soon took hold in order to provide both clarity and direction for a church settling in for the long haul.

But even more conventionally organized communities experienced serious internal problems and conflicts over how the church should be structured and who should be granted roles of leadership. Concerns for church order are evidenced throughout our literature, whether orthonymous (Paul's letters), anonymous (e.g., the Didache), or forged. At the early stage of our literary record, nowhere are the concerns more evident than in two of the Pastoral epistles, 1 Timothy and Titus, forged in Paul's name by the same author who produced 2 Timothy, which we have already considered for another reason and in a different context.

1 TIMOTHY AND TITUS

In that earlier discussion I provided a preliminary sketch of all the background issues of relevance to the question of the pseudonymous character of these two books, and I do not need to repeat that discussion in detail here. My argument can be summed up quickly: all three of the Pastoral epistles were written by the same author; that author was not Paul; strong arguments for this conclusion obtain from considering the three letters as group; but the strongest arguments

derive from each letter individually. The arguments involving 1 Timothy and Titus were already advanced in that earlier context. Moreover, it is important to reiterate that these books were not produced within some kind of "Pauline school" (a modern scholarly invention),[1] nor can their differences be explained (in support of their authenticity) on the grounds that others of Paul's letters were produced by committee, whereas these come from the man himself.[2]

To restate one other fundamental point: even though the three letters were written by the same author, that does not justify the scholarly attempt to conflate their contents into one mega-Pastoral letter, interpreting the three as a unified and uni-functional canon, as done over the past several decades, for example, by such scholars as G. Haufe and P. Trummer, in a different way by Richard Pervo, and most recently by G. Häfner.[3] The character, concerns, and presupposed historical situation of 2 Timothy, in particular, are not those of the other two, and leveling out their differences—particularly when trying to ferret out the teachings of the opponents—creates an amalgam that is both unrecognizable and unhelpful.

For this reason, a number of scholars have argued that the three need to be considered as individual productions, just as one today is more inclined to study Galatians or Philippians as its own literary production, not simply in relation, say, to Romans. It is easy to take this move toward individuation too far, however, as William Richards does in positing three different authors for the three Pastorals, living decades apart.[4] The books should be treated individually, but they still share a number of important features. In particular 1 Timothy and Titus have a good deal in common, in language, concept, theme, and presupposed (i.e., alleged) historical situation. Nowhere is that more evident than in the two overarching concerns of the letters: the attack on false teaching and the concern to establish appropriate church leaders.

The Alleged Historical Situation of the Letters

The concerns to silence false teachers and to appoint appropriate church leaders make particular sense in the historical contexts that the letters presuppose. These situations are roughly similar to one another, and are unlike the ostensible situation of the third of the Pastoral epistles. In 2 Timothy, Paul was in prison awaiting trial and anticipating his imminent death. Not so for 1 Timothy and Titus. As a result, if one does read the letters as a corpus, it would be natural to assume that these two were written somewhat earlier in Paul's life. It is in the allusions to Paul's situation that the great bulk of the letters' verisimilitudes

occur. These may not overwhelm the reader, as those in 2 Timothy threaten to do, but they are abundant enough to show that the author was quite intent on making these letters appear actually to be by the apostle himself.

In 1 Timothy Paul is hoping to come visit his young colleague (4:12) soon (3:14). He had earlier left Timothy in the city of Ephesus to lead the church, to control the false teaching that had erupted there (1:3–7, 18–20), and to be sure that the "right" people were appointed to positions of leadership (3:1–15). It is probably not technically correct to call Timothy the "bishop" of the church, although he certainly does exercise the key leadership role as the one in charge, as seen especially in 4:11–16. But unlike the resident bishop and the deacons, he is passing through. There is some question of whether Paul's designation of him as a "deacon" (4:6) is meant in a technical or general sense; and it is not clear what "gift" was bestowed upon him through "prophetic utterance" when he was ordained by the presbyterial "laying on of hands" (4:14). But however one understands this complicated passage, it does appear that a leadership role has been passed on to Timothy by leaders before him, including the apostle Paul himself.

A very similar situation is assumed for Titus. Here again there is no word about Paul being in prison; on the contrary, he is hoping to meet up with Titus in Nicopolis, where he has decided to spend the winter (3:12). In the meantime, Paul has left Titus behind on the island of Crete in order to appoint presbyters in all the cities there (1:5). These presbyters are evidently meant to serve as bishops of the churches (1:7). Titus is also to bring under control false teachers who are troubling the congregations (1:13) and to work for the social unity and appropriate behavior of the individuals, of different sorts and walks of life, who make up the churches (2:1–10). Here too Titus is envisaged as the ultimate leader of the church on Crete, so long as he is resident among them (2:15).

The Direct Polemic of the Letters

The direct polemic of both letters involves false teachers and "Paul's" insistence that his appointed delegates bring them under control. This is the first and most urgent message to issue from the apostle's pen in 1 Timothy, immediately after the letter opening: "charge certain persons not to teach anything heterodox" (ἵνα παραγγείλῃς τισὶν μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν). And it is also the last note sounded at the end of the letter before the final farewell, "avoid the worthless empty talk and the contradictions of falsely-named gnosis" (ἐκτρεπόμενος τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως).

The topic of false teaching dominates both the opening and final chapters. If that is how an author begins and ends a letter, we can be reasonably sure that it is his principle concern.

So also with Titus. Here, too, the letter begins with an attack on false teachers. Titus is to "correct what is defective," (1:5) and appoint leaders who "hold firm to the true word that is taught" (ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου), who can deliver "sound teaching" (ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαινούσῃ) and refute anyone who contradicts it (1:9). The false teachers must "be silenced" (1:11). The letter, again, ends on a similar note. Titus is to avoid foolish controversies (μωράς . . . ζητήσεις), genealogies, and dissentions, and arguments over the law, "for they are not of profit and futile" (3:9–11). Moreover, any "heretical person" (αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον) is to be admonished once or twice, and then shunned for good (3:10), since anyone like that is "perverted, sinful, and self-condemned" (3:11).

It is much harder to know what exactly it is that the false teachers were (allegedly) saying, whether or not they actually existed.[5] For our purposes here, it does not much matter if the opponents were real or imagined: all we have in any event is the letters themselves, and the author has presented us with a set of false teachers that he portrays as dangerous. Although he provides more information about them in 1 Timothy, the polemical thrust of Titus is very similar. None of the characterizations in the latter is missing from the former, so that even though these are not the same false teachers attacked in 2 Timothy, they do seem to represent a single set of adversaries in these two letters.

It is clear from 1 Timothy that the opponents are imagined as coming from inside the congregation. They have "swerved away" and wandered off into "vain reasoning" (1:6), suggesting that once they had walked the straight and narrow. This is confirmed in the two cases the author mentions, "Hymenaeus" and "Alexander," who have made a "shipwreck of their faith" by rejecting their conscience; these were obviously members of the believing ship's crew before disaster struck, and "Paul" had to "deliver them over to Satan" to teach them no longer to commit their blasphemies (1:20). Later "Paul" indicates that the false teachers—not just the two he has named—are those predicted to come in the end of time, when "some will depart from the faith by holding fast to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons" (πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων). He returns to the topic at the end of the letter, where he speaks of teachers from within the congregations (6:3) who do not "agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ" and the "teaching that accords with piety" (6:3). There is some hint, at least, that these teachers have gone astray from "the faith" out of

love of money (6:9–10).

As so often happens in this kind of polemic, many of the accusations leveled against the false teachers reveal more about the author's prowess in generating vituperation than about the specific teachings that he finds objectionable.[6] In addition to being fond of deceitful spirits and demonic doctrines (4:1), these teachers are "puffed up with conceit," ignorant, and morbidly passionate for controversy and verbal arguments; they are "depraved" in their minds, they lack the truth, and they are pious for the sake of material reward (6:3–7). All this may or may not be true, but it can get us nowhere if we want to know what it is, exactly, these people teach.

In several places, however, the polemic becomes more specific. We may not, at the end of the day, have a coherent picture, and certainly not a complete one, but there are a few features of the false teachings that emerge over the course of the letter. For one thing, the opponents imagine themselves to be "teachers of the Law" (νομοδιδάσκαλοι; 1:7), even though they do not know what they are talking about. Presumably, from the pen of "Paul," this means that the opponents base their views on the Jewish Scriptures, or possibly the Torah exclusively. One might think that since they are characterized as ignorant, that they would be gentile Judaizers rather than Jews, but that would be pressing the polemic too hard, as it is quite easy to accuse even a qualified expert of being an ignorant dilettante.

It is also hard to know how their passion for νόμος relates to their obsession with "myths and endless genealogies" (1:4). Are these Jewish myths and Old Testament genealogies? Or are they cosmogonies such as known from later Gnostic texts? (The latter would not rule out the possibility that the proponents were ethnically and culturally Jewish.) The author returns to the opponents' "empty and ridiculous" myths in 4:7. If this were actually Paul speaking, it would be hard to assume that he would use such disparaging terms about the Jewish Scriptures; on the other hand, if it were Paul, it would also be hard to imagine Gnostic theogonies and cosmogonies sufficiently advanced, at such an early period, to have caused real and present danger to Christians in Ephesus. The "falsely called gnosis" of 6:20 sounds warning bells for anyone attuned to later second-century heresiology. But that may well be an incautious knee-jerk reaction created by deep and intimate association with Irenaeus. At the end of the day, it is hard to know what the author is referring to.

What is somewhat clearer is that the author attacks his opponents for a kind of rigorous asceticism. They "forbid marriage" and "urge abstinence from foods" (4:3). The author objects that God created these foods to be received with

thanks. Unfortunately, since the author does not specify which foods he has in mind, it is not clear whether he is attacking kosher food laws or general ascetic discipline involving abstention from luxuriant or otherwise all-too-desirable edibles. The comparisons and contrasts with Paul himself are intriguing at just this point. Even though Paul did not forbid marriage, he certainly discouraged it (1 Corinthians 7); and even though he allowed all foods—even those offered to idols—he did urge his Corinthian inquiring minds to abstain for the sake of the conscience of others, and, at least in one place, because of the demons (1 Corinthians 8, 10). The false teachers of 1 Timothy, in any event, whether seeing themselves as Paulinists or not (assuming the teachers' existence, whether they are fictional or real), actually forbid marriage and the consumption of certain foods.

What then, in summary, can we say about the teachings of the opposition? Since F. C. Baur, there have been scholars all too ready to speak of them as Gnostics. Myths, genealogies, speculations, pointless asceticism, and "falsely-called" gnosis—it all adds up. On the other hand, there is obviously no full-blown Gnostic speculation here. We don't know what the myths and genealogies are. In Titus, as we will see in a moment, the myths are specified as "Jewish." And the genealogies could as easily be connected with Scripture as with theogonies and cosmogonies known from second-century sources, Gnostic and heresiological. It may be safest to say, then, that we know some of the characteristics of these false teachers but do not have a complete picture. They stress the Jewish Law; they focus on myths and genealogies; they urge asceticism; and they rely on gnosis. It may well be that these are forerunners of groups that eventually became Gnostic, as such are some of the characteristics that could be found among groups that were to emerge later. Possibly they are proto-Gnostics. Considered within their own time, such a designation would be anachronistic: they were who they were and are not necessarily best understood in light of what later teachers would build on the foundations they laid.

The one tie of these teachers to the opponents of 2 Timothy comes in the person of Hymenaeus (1:20; cf. 2 Tim. 2:17–18). As earlier noted, by specifying an enemy, the author distances himself from Paul, who steadfastly refused, at least in his surviving literary remains, to name names. It is also odd that what the author says here—that "Paul" has turned Hymenaeus over to Satan—stands at some tension with what he says in 2 Timothy, where Hymenaeus continues to cause a disturbance in the church. One might suppose that 1 Timothy is being imagined as having been written at a later time, when Paul finally became sufficiently vexed with the fellow to give him the apostolic boot; but that

solution does not accord well with the clear indications that the author envisages 2 Timothy as a kind of "last testament," written near Paul's death, making 1 Timothy, therefore, necessarily earlier. Possibly the author wanted to create another tie between the two letters and simply did not realize that he had created a certain snafu; or, if one wants to play the game of reconciliation a bit, possibly he imagined that Hymenaeus learned his lesson after spending time with Satan, returned to the fold, but then began to misbehave again later. In any event, the reference to this Pauline headache in 1 Timothy seems to suggest that Hymenaeus' behavior is ethically problematic, and that the bad actions are connected to bad theology, since Paul needs to teach him not to "blaspheme." In 2 Timothy the problem involves belief that the resurrection is past. Possibly the author sees the opponent as problematic on numerous fronts, all in one way or another tied together, as was the situation in a remarkably similar case many years earlier with Paul and the enthusiasts at Corinth. One stark difference, on the other hand, as already noted, involves what it means to deliver a person "over to Satan."[7]

As might be expected with a briefer letter, when we move to the explicit polemic of Titus we have even less to go on. Here again there are numerous empty and stereotyped charges that are of little value for determining what the imagined or real opponents actually stood for. They allegedly stand *against* "healthy teaching" (1:9); they are "insubordinate, speakers of vain things, and deceivers" (1:10); they disrupt entire families by teaching for financial profit (1:11); as Cretans they are "liars, wicked beasts, and lazy gluttons" (as one of their own, a fellow Cretan, says; or was he, as all Cretans were, also a liar, so that in fact these charges against them are not true? 1:12); they are not "sound in the faith" (1:13); they are "loathsome, disobedient, and not fit for any good deed" (1:16); moreover, they are "heretical" (αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον), perverted, sinful, and self-condemned (3:10–11), to echo some of the polemic of 1 Timothy.

Here again, though, there are some specific identifying features of the enemy, and in many ways what is said dovetails well with 1 Timothy (though not 2 Timothy). It is striking, however, that the enemies who are particularly "insubordinate … deceivers" are especially those who "are from the circumcision" (1:10). In other words, the worst enemies, though evidently not all of them, are ethnically Jewish. This then makes sense of 1:14–15, that they pay close attention to "Jewish myths," and "human commandments" that have to do with purity regulations.[8] This is another passage, as noted earlier, that is difficult indeed to assign to Paul, who may have seen that the Law was a problem, but not that it was filled with myths and human (as opposed to divine) injunctions.[9] As

in 1 Timothy, the false teachers are involved with “foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and arguments over the Law” (3:9). With the emphasis on the “members of the circumcision,” Jewish myths, purity requirements, and legal disputes, these opponents are more obviously Jewish than those of 1 Timothy; but there is nothing in the description here that runs at odds with the other book. As indicated earlier, J. Sumney may be taking the matter too far when he imagines that the two groups are presented as unrelated. There is a lot of overlap, and not just in the stereotyped polemic.

In any event, Titus is not to argue with the opponents (3:9), but to admonish them in order to return them to the truth (3:11). That is the function of the bishop as well (1:7, 9).

The Indirect Polemic of the Letters

In addition to the direct, if frustratingly ambiguous, attack on false teaching in 1 Timothy and Titus, there are elements of indirect polemic as well, one of which —the appointment of suitable leaders—is probably connected with the explicit polemic, as we will see momentarily. The other is presented just in 1 Timothy, and involves the much debated issue of the role of women in the church.

Women in the Church

It is not clear that all of the injunctions to and about women in 1 Timothy are to be seen as arising out of specific polemical contexts. In some instances, such as the instructions to widows in 5:3–10, the directives may simply involve situations that have arisen as the church has grown and developed. In other words, there is no need, and probably scant reason, to envision a controversy with other Christian leaders insisting that widows should be younger or not enrolled. Even here, however, the author cannot restrain his all-too-obvious opinion of women in the church, as is most evident in his comments on the “younger widows” of 3:11–15, who have, many of them, already “strayed after Satan,” who have learned to be “idle” as they make the rounds from house to house as “gossips” and “busybodies,” and who are inclined to “grow wanton” against Christ and get remarried. Such language is polemical not because it is directed against another set of teachings, but because it is directed against a group of people vilified as if it were in their very nature to gad about as idle busybodies.

The point comes to a head in the infamous 2:11–15, about which enough has

been said over the past fifty years to require, in this context, only a few brief words. That women are instructed to be “silent and submissive” and not to “exercise authority over a man” simply cannot be reconciled with the Pauline policy, as restrictive as it was, that required women to prophesy and pray in church only while wearing head coverings (1 Cor. 11: 2–16). Either women can speak in church or they cannot; and prophecy by its very nature asserts authority.[10] Moreover, the idea that women would be saved not by faith in Christ, for example, but by having babies is, to put the most generous spin on it, un-Pauline at best.

As in the discussion of the “young widows,” this restriction, or rather curtailment, of the participation of women in the church is polemical in the sense that it is opposing an activity that almost certainly was thought to have been common: women teaching and exercising authority in the church. But can we say anything more specifically about the background to the attack? In one of the most important and interesting studies of the Pastoral epistles in recent years, Annette Merz has argued that the author is not merely on the attack against an established practice, but that he understands the practice to be rooted in a misreading, or at least an inadequate reading, of the Pauline letters themselves. In this view, the author writes the Pastorals, in part, in order to redirect the reading of a passage that Merz takes to be authentically Pauline, 1 Cor. 14:34–35.[11]

This argument is part of Merz’s larger project of suggesting a theoretically sophisticated intertextual approach to the Pastoral epistles. The standard approach to intertextuality appeals to the texts that a passage refers to in order to help clarify how the passage is to be interpreted: “The openness of texts to a variety of interpretations is largely due to the dialogue between those texts which are evoked in their reception.”[12] As Merz points out, however, the process of interpretation can work both ways. When the concern of the interpreter involves how to interpret a passage, and its various intertexts are invoked to that end, then it is a “text-oriented” approach. But it is also significant that once the passage is interpreted, its meaning, newly established, is often applied back to the intertexts themselves in order to deepen their meaning as well. As an example that Merz draws from the Pastorals, when 1 Tim. 5:18 invokes Deut. 25:4 (“Do not muzzle an ox that is treading”) in order to support its view that church leaders deserve to be paid, Christians familiar with this interpretation who then read the passage in Deuteronomy are more inclined to take it in the sense that it is used in 1 Timothy, so that it is understood even in its original Old Testament context to refer to paying one’s minister. This inversion of the interpretative process, in

which the intertext is subject to a new interpretation, is a “reference-oriented” approach to intertextuality.

Merz contends that the Pastorals are meant to provide reference-oriented strategies of interpretation for their intertexts. Or to use the terminology that has come to be in vogue, the Pastorals provide “reading instructions” for the Pauline letters to which they allude. Anyone who reads the Pastoral epistles as having come from Paul as part of his corpus of writings interprets the various passages in the Pauline letters in light of one another. The other letters can and are, then, read through the lens of the Pastorals, just as, historically speaking, they were, and are, read by readers who naturally assume that they are orthonymous.

Normally this process of reference-oriented intertextual reading implies both an alternative way of reading a text and one or more readers who read it that way. That is to say, the process is innately polemical. And so the idea that office holders in the church should be paid may seem to stand at odds with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9. But in fact if 1 Corinthians 9 is read in light of 1 Timothy 5, then those who oppose paying their preachers are put in a compromising position by “Paul” himself. So too the requirement that young widows remarry (1 Tim. 5:14) seems to stand at odds with what Paul, and many of his readers, thought, based on 1 Corinthians 7. Merz in particular argues that “Paul’s” instructions in 1 Tim. 6:1–5 about Christian slaves and slaveholders has close parallels (verbal and conceptual) to Philemon 16, which could be read as suggesting that slaves were to be manumitted by their Christian owners; but not for the author of the Pastorals, who insists, as a way of countering this reading of Philemon, that slaves are to remain in their subjection to their Christian masters.

With respect to the issue of women in the church, Merz argues that 1 Tim. 2:11–15 is to be understood as a guide for reading the less forthright injunctions of 1 Cor. 14:33–36. In this connection she stresses the well-known verbal parallels between the two passages, and suggests they are no accident: ἡσυχίᾳ / σιγάτωσαν; μανθανέτω / μάθειν; ὑποταγῇ / ὑποτασσέσθωσαν; ἐπιτρέπω / ἐπιτρέπεται. Moreover, the author has shifted from the more vague λαλεῖν to the more precise διδασκεῖν, and has filled out the rather ambiguous “as the Law says” to the specific Torah interpretation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). Most striking, the author has moved from a passive οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν to the more explicit prohibition, διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω.

As a result, as Margaret Mitchell approvingly notes, the possible ambiguities of 1 Corinthians, which in one place appear to allow women to exercise authority (11:2–16), are overcome with an explicit directive that shows how Paul

is to be read.[13] Contrary to the practice, possibly built on the writings of Paul (Gal. 3:28, etc.), women are not to be allowed to be actively involved in the church's liturgy.

As insightful and potentially enlightening this interpretive move is, its difficulties reside in the obvious questions of the status of 1 Cor. 14:34–35 itself. The reference-oriented reading works only if there was a referent text in place, and there continue to be compelling reasons for thinking that the Corinthian passage is an interpolation.[14] If the Pastorals are referring to the altered form of the text of 1 Corinthians 14, the interpolation would have had to have been made at an extremely early date. Moreover, one could just as easily maintain that the verbal and conceptual parallels exist precisely because a later copyist, familiar with the words of 1 Tim. 2:11–15, decided to reinscribe their teaching by inserting a comparable passage into the text of 1 Corinthians. If so, the author of the Pastorals is not obsessed with guiding the reading of another Pauline epistle but is simply concerned with a practice that he deems inappropriate and even dangerous, as women speak out and exercise authority over men. As we will see, this is a common anxiety for the forged church orders, which show a constant concern that the activities of women needed to be regulated in the names of the apostles.

The Church Offices

One of the overarching concerns of both 1 Timothy and Titus is obviously the leadership of the church. As I have already observed, it is important to note that the author does not take steps toward establishing the sundry church offices. By the time of his writing, there were already bishops and deacons in the churches with which he was familiar. In other words, this writer is not advancing beyond the charismatic communities known, say, from the Corinthian correspondence to propose a more hierarchically structured organization. He was living in an age in which the hierarchy was already in place and in which church leaders were ordained to office; communities were no longer run by Spirit-filled members who received gifts at baptism. The question the author is concerned to address involves the qualifications of these leaders. The emphatic insistence that only the "right people" be allowed to occupy leadership roles may well relate to the other polemical concerns of the letters. Here only a few words need to be said about these roles.

It is clear from 1 Timothy that the ἐπίσκοπος is ultimately in charge of the church, after the apostle himself and his appointed delegate, Timothy. This much

is evident from 3:5: just as the bishop manages or runs his own household, so too he is to manage or run the church. Since one can “aspire to be bishop,” the leaders appear to be chosen from candidates who wish to be considered; they are not chosen completely by lot or some other divinely ordained procedure. Presumably the same applies to the deacons as well.[15] It is not clear how the πρεσβύτεροι (plural) of 5:17 who “rule” relate to the bishop (singular) of 3:1–7, or to the διάκονοι of 3:8–13, whether the “elders” are a separate group of men or instead are the men who inhabit the other two categories. If they are a separate group, it seems odd that the author does not spell out their qualifications, as he does for the others. In Titus they are to be “appointed” (1:5). In any event, it is somewhat unclear whether there are three offices involved here (bishop, presbyters, deacons) or just two (bishop, deacons), both of which constitute “elders.”

Titus is instructed to “appoint presbyteroi in every city” (1:5). Obviously, since they are to be appointed, the presbyteroi are not simply older men, but (older?) men who have a leadership role in the churches. Since the author goes on to describe the qualifications of the episkopos two verses later, without indicating that he is talking about someone else now, a reasonable assumption is that the appointed elders in fact are appointed to be overseers. The qualifications of 1:7–9 are similar to those found in 1 Timothy, although there is a greater emphasis here on the need for the bishop to silence false teachers (1:9–11). There is no reference to the διάκονοι in this briefer letter.

For our purposes one of the most interesting questions has to do with the polemical function of these concerns over church leadership. As I have noted, both of these books begin and end with injunctions about false teaching and contain similar doctrinal concerns scattered throughout. Is this concern for “healthy teaching” unrelated to the need to allow only the right people in leadership roles? Or, rather, are the overarching polemical concerns of these books directly connected with their interest in leadership? As just indicated, Titus itself makes the connection directly, especially in 1:7, 9–11. Just as Paul’s personal delegates are instructed to get the false teachers under control, so too are the bishops.

One of the salient purposes of these forgeries, then, is to give apostolic authorization for a church hierarchy that was needed in no small measure because of the variegated and dangerous teachings that had emerged in the Pauline communities near the end of the first century (assuming that this is when the letters were written, if not later). In the broader picture, how could “false” teachings most effectively be countered? By setting forth the true, apostolic

teachings. When there were no longer apostles around to provide these teachings, one solution was to employ a form of literary deceit more widely used in the surrounding world at large. Claiming to be an apostle, an author could write treatises promoting the proper understanding of the faith, lying about his identity in order to advance the cause of truth. Moreover, true teaching could best be enforced from the top down, by leaders of the churches who saw the truth and were willing to silence anyone who violated it. And how was one to authorize the "right kind" of church leadership? Forgery again proved to be a useful tool. Writing in the name of Paul, a later forgery could presuppose the proper church hierarchy, insist on certain ecclesiastical arrangements, such as keeping women silent, and promote the cause of having the right leaders in charge.

Eventually within the proto-orthodox tradition this insistence on apostolic doctrines (even if found in forgeries) and on apostolic church structures (again, supported pseudepigraphically) created the need for other forms of authorization. This need is what drove the development of the various arguments over "succession" in which both the teachings of the orthodox churches and the bishops of those churches could be established as standing in continuity with predecessors who were appointed by those who stood directly in the line of the apostles. And since the apostles learned at the feet of Christ, and Christ came from God, the church hierarchy and the doctrine it proclaimed was divinely sanctioned. Those who proposed different structures or different theological views could be cast out as schismatics and heretics who had alienated themselves from the Almighty.

The Pastorals and the Acts of Paul

In pursuing the motivating factors behind the forgery of the Pastoral epistles, we need to consider a once-popular opinion that these three books were written, at least in part, in order to counter the views embodied in the second-century Acts of Paul. I will not be dealing with the Acts of Paul as a possible forgery or counterforgery per se, since so far as we can tell from both patristic references and the scant manuscript tradition, the book, or set of books, did not claim Paul as the author but only as the leading subject of its narrative. The author, in other words, did not make a false authorial claim.

There is a debate over whether Tertullian has in mind the same Acts of Paul that has come down to us in our scattered manuscripts, when he makes his famous deprecatory comment that "it was a presbyter in Asia who put together

that book compiling the work from his own materials in the name of Paul. Having been convicted, he confessed that he had done it out of love for Paul" (*De baptismo* 17).[16] Stevan Davies has mounted a multipronged argument that Tertullian has in mind an actual forgery that no longer survives, rather than the extant Acts; but W. Rordorf and A. Hilhorst have provided convincing refutations and defenses of the traditional view,[17] and in the end, the matter does not affect the questions I want to pursue here, which involve instead the relation of the surviving Acts, especially the Thecla story, to the Pastoral epistles. It does bear emphasizing, in any event, that Tertullian does not accuse the author of the Acts of Paul of forging the document but of fabricating it—a major difference (that is, it was "written in Paul's name" because the "Acts of Paul" names Paul in its title). This too is the claim of Jerome, who stresses that the book is apocryphal precisely because it is historically inaccurate (*Vir. Ill.*, 7). Jerome's proof: if such a story as Paul and the baptized lion had actually occurred, surely Luke would have known of it and included it in his canonical account of Paul's ministry! Moreover, it should be stressed that according to Tertullian, the offending presbyter was not expelled from office, as often claimed. After admitting to what he had done, he left office himself.[18] The Acts of Paul was judged—at least by these two authors—as an unacceptable fabrication.

But can the Pastoral epistles be understood as forgeries meant to counter the claims of these apocryphal tales? If so, how does one explain their relative dating? Already a century ago Hans Helmut Mayer argued that the Pastorals were directed, in part, against some of the views found in the Acts of Paul, a view influentially popularized by Dennis MacDonald in the early 1980s.[19] To evaluate the view, we need to consider some of the important data.[20]

There are six proper names that occur in the Thecla story connected with Paul. Five of them occur, as well, often in related connections, in the Pastoral epistles: (1) Demas (AP, 3.1; 2 Tim. 4:10; also Col. 4:14 and Phlm. 24) in both places deserting Paul, both times for greed; (2) Hermogenes (AP, 3.1; 2 Tim. 1:15), whose name occurs only in these two places in early Christian literature, and in both places he is twinned with a companion and deserts Paul in Asia Minor; (3) Onesiphorus (AP 3.2; 2 Tim. 1:16; 4:19), mentioned in early Christian literature only in these two places, and in both instances he is connected with Asia Minor, he befriends Paul when Paul is in prison, and he appears with his family; (4) Titus (AP 3.2; 2 Tim. 4:10; Tit. 1:4; ten times in 2 Corinthians and Galatians); and (5) Alexander (AP 3.26; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:14), who is said to oppose Paul, in both places, and only there. The one exception is Castellius (AP 3.14), who appears in the Acts only as a governor at

the trial, not in Paul’s ministry per se.

It is also worth noting that in both corpora there are two people connected with Paul who indicate that the resurrection has already taken place (Demas and Hermogenes in AP; Hymenaeus and Phileus in 2 Timothy). Moreover, both corpora connect a “coppersmith” with Paul, either Alexander (2 Timothy) or Hermogenes (AP).

In addition, there are four place names mentioned in the Acts of Paul, three of which also recur in the Pastorals: Iconium (3.1; 2 Tim. 3:11; five times in Acts); Antioch (3.1; 2 Tim. 3:11; sixteen times in Acts, once in Galatians); and Lystra (1.3; 2 Tim. 3:11; five times in Acts). The one exception is Myra (AP 3.40; twice in Acts).

Some of the material parallels between the works are similarly impressive. For example, from outside the Thecla story, in AP 11.1, we learn that Luke from Gaul and Titus from Dalmatian were awaiting Paul at Rome. Compare this with 2 Tim. 4:10–11, where Paul is writing from prison, presumably from Rome, and he indicates that Titus has gone “to Dalmatia” and that “Luke alone is with me.” More striking still is the famous account of Paul and the baptized lion in the Acts of Paul. At this point of the narrative, Paul has been staying with Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus, and everyone else has turned against him. With no support, he makes a bold witness before the governor and the crowd. The governor condemns him to be eaten by a ferocious lion, but the lion—Paul’s previous acquaintance and convert—refuses to eat him and they both flee the scene unharmed. Compare this with 2 Tim. 4:16–19, where “Paul” indicates that no one took part at his defense and that everyone deserted him; but “the Lord stood by me and strengthened me so that the message could be fully proclaimed through me and all the Gentiles could hear.” Moreover, at that time, “Paul” indicates that he “was saved from the mouth of the lion.” He continues on, then, to send his greetings to Prisca and Acquila.

Despite these verbal and material overlaps, there are antithetical emphases in these two corpora that make their relationship of particular interest. And so, for example, 2 Tim. 3:6–7 attacks those who enter into households and capture weak women. This is precisely what the apostle himself appears to do in the Acts of Paul, certainly in the case of Thecla and later with Artemilla and Eubula. Similarly, Titus 1:10–11 speaks of opponents who upset entire households. Evidently these Christian teachers urge some form of asceticism, since Titus responds by asserting that with the pure all things are pure (i.e., nothing is forbidden). Thecla’s household in the Acts of Paul was certainly turned topsy-turvy by Paul’s proclamation in the home of Onesiphorus next door, a

proclamation that has a rigorously ascetic bent. 1 Tim. 4:3 opposes those who are driven by deceitful spirits and the doctrines of demons to forbid marriage. So too, the Pastor requires leaders of the churches to be married, and urges young widows to remarry and have babies. In the Acts of Paul, Paul may not condemn marriage, but he certainly discourages it, as in the lead case of Thecla; moreover, it is his enemies Hermogenes and Demas who offer the teaching, contrary to Paul, that the resurrection happens precisely in one's progeny. In 1 Tim. 2:15 women are said to be "saved" by having children; whereas in the Acts of Paul women learn, through Paul's beatitudes, that it is the celibate who abstain from sex who will be blessed. So too, whereas the Pastor's women are not allowed to teach, but must be silent and submissive, in the legends Paul commissions a woman to go forth and teach (AP 3.39, 41, 43). Finally, whereas 1 Tim. 4:3 opposes those who abstain from certain foods, Paul in the Acts appears to maintain a vegetarian diet (AP 3.23–25).

And so, without yet drawing a specific conclusion concerning the direction in which the influence went, it is difficult to withstand the conclusion of J. Rohde that the Acts of Paul accepts as "legitimate teaching" what the Pastorals reject as "false."[21] Indeed, it would be a mistake to claim that the two corpora are unrelated, on the ground, for example, that so much material present in each—the legends of the Acts and the teaching of the Pastorals—is neither found nor maligned in the other. No one need think that the single purpose of either body of writings was to attack the other; but some such polemic could well have been at least one of its purposes. At all times we need to recall that texts, as a rule, are generated for multiple reasons and serve multiple purposes. And so we are justified in considering the reason and purpose of the Acts of Paul in relation to the Pastoral epistles.

The most provocative view of the relation of the two corpora was the aforementioned monograph of Dennis MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*.[22] In his study, MacDonald explored three episodes of the Acts of Paul: the Thecla story, the account of the baptized lion, and the martyrdom of Paul. He argued that these stories were based on oral traditions that had been in circulation principally among Christian women in Asia Minor, so that Tertullian's presbyter was simply writing down accounts he had heard. The Pastoral epistles, on the other hand, were written in opposition to these oral traditions. There is not, in other words, a direct literary dependence between the two works, one way or the other; nor is the Acts of Paul responding to views eventually embodied in the Pastoral epistles. The relationship is the reverse: the Pastorals are responding to oral traditions that were later put in

writing in the Acts of Paul.

Despite the attractiveness of the theory, it suffers from a weak set of arguments used to undermine a more obvious solution, that whoever wrote the Acts of Paul was reacting to the (earlier) Pastoral epistles. MacDonald argues that the influence did not go in this direction because, first of all, any author, such as the composer of the Acts of Paul, who "wanted to alter the traditional memory of a historical figure" (the author of the Pastorals), "would be more likely to use forged letters than a collection of stories."[23] But surely this is not self-evident; if the Pastorals themselves can be read as a kind of narrative—as Richard Pervo and others have tried to do[24]—there is no reason they could not be responded to by a narrative. And there is certainly nothing to preclude an author writing a narrative that had, as a subsidiary purpose, the opposition to a view of his protagonist set forth in some other influential writing, regardless of genre. MacDonald goes on to argue that if the author of the Acts was opposing the Pastorals, "we would expect to find him authenticating the narrative in order to secure credulity over against the epistolary opposition." Here again, there is no reason that we should tell authors what they ought to do, or expect them to take what in the modern critical mind seems to be a more effective approach.

Most important for MacDonald is his claim that a theory of literary dependence is able to explain the similarities between the two texts, but not the differences in the details. For example, in the Acts of Paul Hermogenes is associated with Demas; but in the Pastorals he is associated with Phygelus. If one is dependent on the other—as arguably shown by the similarities—it is hard to account, in MacDonald's view, for such differences.

The major problem with this position is that it requires far too narrow an understanding of how literary dependence can work and overlooks an entire range of possibilities involving secondary orality. It is not necessary to suppose that an author who is responding to a text will have the writing on his knee, comparing every line as he proceeds to write his narrative (or epistle). He may just as well—especially in an ancient context—have heard the earlier text read aloud, possibly multiple times, and decided then to respond to its themes. Many of the names and places may well be recalled, but it is altogether possible that the specifics get lost. I myself have read the Pastoral epistles literally hundreds of times in both Greek and English, and I could not tell you, without looking it up, with whom Hermogenes is associated in the text, or even if Phygelus is mentioned in it. One should not respond by insisting that matters were different in past oral cultures; if studies of oral cultures have taught us anything, it is that stories were not remembered or repeated precisely the same way in every

iteration.

There is a broad consensus that the Acts of Paul as we have it are the product of the late second century. If these are the works referred to by Tertullian in *De baptismo* 17—which continues to be a strong consensus—and if he is correct that they were first put together near the end of the second century, then on virtually any reckoning they came into existence some time after the Pastorals. If, as appears evident, there is some kind of relation between the two corpora, the most sensible solution is to think that the author of the Acts is responding in narrative form to the image of Paul, and of his views, found in the earlier texts. He worked to rewrite Paul in significant ways. Paul's message is now one of rigorous ascetic celibacy (whereas in the Pastorals he condemned asceticism and urged women to have babies); women are now empowered and allowed to teach and preach; and the unity of the home is not to be protected.

At the same time, it should be stressed that even if the Pastorals were not written as responses to the Acts of Paul, the traditions and views embodied in these later accounts were not invented out of whole cloth sometime late in the second century. Ascetic impulses can be found early in the Christian movement, as evidenced not only in the Pastorals. Paul himself urged celibacy in view of the "impending crisis" and insisted that "it is good for a man not to touch a woman." Women were afforded active roles in the churches, as seen, most strikingly and emphatically, by Paul himself, as attested in Gal. 3:28; Rom. 16:1, 7; and 1 Corinthians 11. Other Paulinists objected to such views, urging the value of the extended family and the Haustafeln that kept everyone in their place, arguing for the "freedom" of the whole person in Christ, propounding the virtues of marriage and sexual activities. The apocalyptic urgency that created an unworldly and, seen from a Roman point of view, antisocial attitude among Christians eventually lost out to (what cannot help but appear to observers today to be) a bourgeois ethic.

In that environment the Pastoral epistles were written, in part to oppose views advocated by other Paulinists, opponents who could well appeal to Paul himself for their views. These views did not die out with the writing of opposing forgeries in Paul's name. They lived on in some circles that passed along the oral traditions they inherited about the apostle, which stressed the importance of the ascetic, celibate life and celebrated the important roles that women could play in the church. Eventually these traditions came to be written down in such works as the Acts of Thecla. The Pastoral epistles may not be counterforgeries in the strong sense of being produced in order to oppose the view found in another identifiable forgery, or even an existing legendary fabrication; but they are

counterforgeries in the weaker sense of opposing views associated otherwise with Paul by using the best set of ammunition available to the unknown author: the name of the apostle himself. The real, but unknown, author lied about his own identity in order to bring the apostolic voice to bear on a set of issues that were very much a matter of intense debate in his own day.

THE FORGED CHURCH ORDERS

We have already seen that several of the "church orders" produced in our period were forged. This would include the Epistula Clementis, the Didascalia, and the Apostolic Constitutions, the last of which could also be considered a case of plagiarism, depending on how far one stretches the meaning of the term.[25] The earliest examples of the genre were not always forged: witness the anonymous Didache, which avers to propound the teaching of the twelve apostles, but whose author does not claim to be the apostolic band or even one of its members. So too the Apostolic Tradition, later attributed, wrongly, to Hippolytus of Rome.[26] Other church orders fall outside of our time period.[27]

There have been long debates over the character of these documents and their instructions for church organization and administration. Do they represent descriptive and reasonably full accounts of the protocols that governed the life of the Christian community? Or do they deal only with issues and problems that have arisen within an author's purview, and do not therefore provide a full representation of the organizational and administrative issues that a community had to address, the bulk of which would have been nonproblematic and therefore in no need of discussion? That is to say, are these church orders reasonably exhaustive and descriptive accounts? Or are they selective, polemical, and prescriptive?

The decision between these two options obviously matters. If the church orders are principally descriptive, then in them we gain an extensive insight into the lives of the pre-Constantinian churches, at least in the regions from which they derive, and by subtraction we can see what these churches were not doing as well. If they are principally polemical and prescriptive, they are not protocols for the most important activities of the community, but *Tendenzschriften* that deal only with what the author perceives as the problems and (possibly deplorable) state of affairs in his community. This too would be helpful historically, as it would show us what internal organizational issues were being debated in the Christians communities of the first three hundred years.

Bruno Steimer, in his study *Vertex Traditionis*, a 1991 dissertation at

Regensburg, takes the first position. The book deals with twelve church orders, starting with the Didache and moving up through the fifth-century Clementine Octateuch. Steimer is chiefly concerned with establishing the generic features of these works, but he deals extensively with issues related to pseudepigraphy throughout, especially in a closing section exclusively devoted to the question. In this final section he argues that although pseudonymity is not a generic requirement, it is one of the ways that the author of a church order could most successfully perform his task, in that the apostolic pseudonym naturally provided legitimation for the positions he asserts. That is to say, the apostles are typically presented as "formal authorities" to back up the views that are advanced and work to show that these orders were normative for the church from the outset, all the way back to the apostles of Jesus themselves.[28] The pseudepigraphic claims, therefore, function to gain the works acceptance and universal validity.

Steimer summarizes the important matters dealt with in this literature, most of them involving the church as an institution: the qualification and selection of leaders, their duties, church discipline, ethical and doctrinal instruction, observance of rituals such as baptism and eucharist, and so on. In Steimer's view, these books represent the church's actual practice, and to that extent they are descriptive accounts. For that reason, it is possible to recreate extensively the activities of the early churches, since the most important church concerns are addressed "mit Umfassendheit."[29]

A trenchant review of Steimer's work by Georg Schöllgen provides compelling counterarguments to this view.[30] Schöllgen focuses on the Didache, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Didascalia, arguing that for these three, "nowhere is it clear that they intend to order life in their communities comprehensively. There is no 'pretended universalization of order' to speak of."[31] For Schöllgen, the church orders do not represent a codification of the typical praxis of the community; rather, they deal with problems that had arisen —such as those, quite obviously, involving itinerant prophets and apostles in the Didache. This is shown especially by the fact that the authors have had to cement their views in writing, accompanied with paranesis, under the authority of the apostles. The authors are trying to argue a case in light of abuses in the community, involving such matters as the roles of women, alternative forms of governance, and care of the poor. They do not simply indicate something about the status quo. Among other things, church orders represent an attempt to make the monepiscopate more central to the life of the community.[32]

In particular, the forged character of these books shows that they were not written simply to state the current state of affairs: "Pseudepigraphy is thus a clear

argument against the ‘reflection theory’: Why should a church order, which does not intend anything but ‘to put into writing’ the community’s practice, do so not in the name of its actual authors or its community, but instead takes the risk of being unmasked as an act of deception?” The use of pseudepigraphy served then to justify practices where there were controversies about them: “The borrowed authority of the apostles was intended to make the text binding in a way that the author could not have achieved by publishing it under his own name.”[33]

It is especially significant for Schöllgen that these documents are scripturally based. The authority of the apostles, as found in Scripture, was important for establishing the veracity of the claims made in them. And so the apostolic character of the church orders is in a sense an extension of the authority of Scripture, so that these too function as Scripture in dealing with community problems that had arisen.[34] What is more, when a book like the Didascalia likens the office of the bishop to the office of the apostle, with similar functions ascribed to both (νουθετεῖν, διδασκεῖν), the bishop is presented as having the same role in his congregations that the apostles have for the entire church. They are the mouth of God and the witness to the divine will, through the proper interpretation of Scripture.

In short, when considering the church orders, we are dealing with inherently polemical literature, even when the polemics are below the surface. Sometimes, of course, the polemics are front and center, as we have already observed with the Didascalia. At other times, however, they are far more subtle, as we can see by looking at other aspects of these works.

The Didascalia

We have already considered the Didascalia at some length with respect to the anti-Jewish character of its teaching on the “secondary legislation,” which was put into the document, according to the theory of Stewart-Sykes, by the deuterotic redactor, who worked before an editor inserted the apostolic claims that make the text pseudepigraphic.[35] There is no need at this stage to review all of the relevant background information on the document itself and its (possible) redactional states. Rather we can turn to consider several of its other polemical interests, also advanced in the names of the apostles after the death of Jesus.

The Role of the Bishop

Some readers have suspected that the heightened emphasis on the role of the

bishop in the life of the community is not simply descriptive of situations that widely obtained at the time of the author's writing, but represent a plea to grant the bishop greater authority. It is striking that eight of the twenty-seven chapters of the book deal with the office, responsibilities, and behavior of the bishop. Charlotte Methuen contends that "the Didascalia must be seen as part of an ongoing struggle to establish a more hierarchical Church centered on the bishop, which led to the discrediting of other forms of authority and the groups which supported them."[36] In particular she has in mind church groups that stressed the possibility of women exercising authoritative roles in the work of teaching and baptizing, a matter to which we will turn momentarily. But it is also possible that the stress on the bishop was driven by broader concerns of localizing the power of the local congregation in the hands of one authority figure who was able thereby to marginalize and overturn schismatic and heretical factions advocating alternative forms of polity or the age-old bugbear, "false teaching."

The Celebration of Easter

In an analysis that only an inveterate source critic could love, Alistair Stewart-Sykes provides a long and complicated discussion of the multiple redactions of what comes down to us as chapter 21 of the Didascalia, a chapter that discusses passion week and the sequence of days leading up to the celebration of Easter. It is by all accounts a complicated and confusing part of the text, with instructions concerning what to perform on which days in relation to Jesus' last week and, as well, in relation to the Jewish feast of Pascha:

> Thus it is required, brothers, that you investigate carefully in the days of the Pascha and perform your fasting with all diligence, making a beginning when your brothers from the people [i.e., the Jews] are keeping the Pascha. (5.17.1) … Therefore from the tenth, which is the second day of the week, you shall fast in the days of the Pascha. You shall sustain yourselves with bread and salt and water only, at the ninth hour, until the fifth day of the week. However on the Friday and Saturday you shall fast entirely. (5.18.1) … For this reason you likewise are to mourn on their behalf on the sabbath day of the Pascha, until the third hour of the night following. And then, at the resurrection of Christ, rejoice and be glad on their behalf, and break your fast. (5.20.9) You shall observe it in this way whenever the fourteenth of the Pascha should occur, for neither the month nor the day falls at the same time each year, but is changeable. Thus you should be fasting when that people

> performs the Pascha; yet be careful to conclude your vigil within their (week of) unleavened bread. (5.20.10)

In an attempt to make sense of the various comments of the text, Stewart-Sykes argues that the book originated as a document that embraced a Quartodeciman perspective, but that it was later edited to oppose this perspective.[37] The result was a view that supported the observance of Easter on Sunday, but within the Quartodeciman milieu—that is, during the celebration of the Pascha, but always on a Sunday—a compromise position hammered out in the midst of some rather fierce controversy over the celebration of this most important festival in the life of the church.

The Role of Women

Several scholars have argued that a particular concern of the Didascalia is to control the activities of women in the church. G. Schöllgen, for example, maintains that the directions given to widows not to engage in pastoral duties, but to do good deeds only in the sphere of the home, represent a polemic against other practices that were being followed, a view supported by Carolyn Osiek and, strongly, Charlotte Methuen.[38]

The instructions given to and about widows occur in book 3. A widow must be over fifty years of age (3.1.1)[39]; she is not allowed to remarry more than once: "After this she is a harlot" (3.2.2). The author is especially concerned about widows who are "talkative or loud, or garrulous, or fond of strife" (3.5.1). Widows are not to instruct in doctrine, since "when a woman speaks of the incarnation and suffering of Christ, [the gentiles] shall sneer and scoff, rather than glorifying the word of the old woman, and she shall be subject to a harsh judgement for her sin" (3.6.1). Women, then, are not to teach, but "solely to pray and beseech the Lord God" (3.6.2). The author's apostolic logic: when the Lord "sent us, the twelve" to proclaim the gospel, he "did not send with us the women disciples who were with us … to instruct or save the world." Impeccable logic, of its sort. The author instructs widows not to "wander or go from house to house" (3.6.4), and is especially concerned for widows who go about begging for alms, "caring only for mammon" (3.7.3–4).

In particular he stresses that women are not allowed to baptize, even other women (3.9.1–2). But they may serve as deaconesses who can speak to other women in the houses of pagans and to anoint with oil other women at their baptism, although it must be the man who pronounces the invocation of the

divine names at the ceremony (3.12.1–3). Moreover, women are allowed to educate other women who come out of baptism, “so that the mark of baptism may be kept intact in chastity and holiness” (3.12.3).

In short, as summarized by Carolyn Osiek, women are not considered empowered subjects in this text; they are “reduced to cloistered ignoramuses who can be trusted with nothing”; they cannot speak to pagans or else they will make Christianity an object of ridicule (3.5); they must stay at home to pray and spin, or they will be spiritually bankrupt (3.6, 7); they can engage in no ministry unless ordered by the bishop or deacon, whom they must obey (3.8); for them to baptize would be dangerous both to themselves and to the ones they baptize (3.9); just as the altar does not move about, so too they must stay at home (3.6.3).[40]

As indicated, several scholars have suggested that the vehemence with which these injunctions are set forth suggests that the author is trying to prescribe a form of church authority in the face of opposition from another model. Thus Methuen: “The tone and content of these instructions make it likely that they are a polemic against women who do indeed baptize and teach and who in so doing assume a function and authority which the author regards as the exclusive province of the bishop.”[41] And Osiek: “The length of texts devoted to the subject and the vehemence expressed are exceptional, however, and seem to indicate a reaction to some real or imagined threatening situation.”[42]

According to Methuen’s reconstruction of the historical *Sitz*, a group of widows who are accustomed to teaching and baptizing have come into the Didascalia’s community from another group: “The strength of his reaction against the widows suggests that they might come from outside the Didascalia congregation, representing a group which subscribes to a different pattern of ministry and authority, and, moreover, to one which grants freedom and authority to women.”[43]

In response, it might be pointed out that there is nothing in the polemic to suggest any outside influence. More likely the author’s polemic is directed against what has traditionally happened in the community and what continues to happen in his own day. He is writing to prevent women from engaging in activities they were already involved with.

Osiek puts the matter in a sensible broader context:

> The more hierarchically structured Christian churches of the second and third centuries often felt themselves to be in a state of siege because of the threat posed by the more “charismatic” or loosely structured

> communities that more often than not seem to have allowed a great deal of freedom and responsibility to women, especially in the area of religious leadership.

As a result,

> the attempt to restrict severely the activities of widows is, no doubt, part of the well-known reaction against the freedom exercised by women in rival Christian groups. Or, more specifically, it could be a reaction against the very important role played by members of the order of widows in neighboring churches.[44]

To this extent, the Didascalia would be a kind of counterforgery, in the broad sense, produced, in its final redaction, in the names of the apostles in order to rein in a dominant practice in which women, and especially widows, were exercising considerable authority in their roles in the church.

The Apostolic Constitutions

At the outset of our investigation we saw a number of key aspects of the Apostolic Constitutions.[45] The book is a heavily redacted text that combines three otherwise extant documents in order to make a more all-encompassing church order: the Didascalia (in what are now chs. 1–7); the Didache (ch. 8), and the Apostolic Tradition (ch. 8). To the end is added the eighty-five "Apostolic Canons," which may have had a separate transmission history at some stage, but are now known only in their connection with this larger work.[46]

Thomas Kopecek has noted that the Greek text of the Apostolic Constitutions was first edited in the sixteenth century by a Spanish Jesuit, Franciscus Turrianus, whose interest in the work, as a Roman Catholic, was to appeal to its apostolic authority in order to refute the Protestant understanding of the church. In the centuries that followed, Anglican divines cited the final book of the work in order to advance their views of the liturgy, as sanctioned by the apostles. As Kopecek points out, "This interpretation died hard."[47]

Possibly this late use of the document can provide a clue as to the purpose of its original concoction. For it does indeed appear to have been generated in order to justify certain ecclesiastical structures through the sanctioning power of the pens of the apostles. It was only when the sources of the work were discovered

and evaluated that scholars abandoned any claims to its apostolic provenance.

Pseudepigraphic Character and Date

Of the three sources that were used to construct the Apostolic Constitutions, only the Didascalia came to the editor/author (in its final redacted form) as pseudepigraphic; the other two works were anonymous. But when edited into a larger whole, all three works have become pseudonymous, and in fact the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions has gone well beyond the Didascalia itself in emphasizing his book's apostolic origins. As noted earlier, the apostolic claim is made, now, at the beginning of each of the major divisions (beginnings of books 1, 7, and 8). On occasion throughout the work the author speaks in the first-person plural as eyewitnesses and disciples of the earthly Jesus, as in 2.55.2:

> After His passion [we] the twelve apostles, and Paul the chosen vessel. … We therefore, who have been vouchsafed the favour of being the witnesses of His appearance, together with James the brother of our Lord, and the other seventy-two disciples, and his seven deacons, have heard from the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by exact knowledge declare "what is the will of God, that good, and acceptable, and perfect will."[48]

Or in book 6, when speaking of the Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15:

> But because this heresy did seem the more powerful to seduce men, and the whole Church was in danger, we the twelve assembled together at Jerusalem.… We deliberated, together with James the Lord's brother, what was to be done.… And when one said one thing, and some another, I Peter stood up and said to them [etc.] … (6.12)

In Book 8, "we, the twelve apostles of the Lord," (8.4) along with Paul and James (the brother of Jesus), give instructions, individually by name: "I, Peter, say that a bishop to be ordained is to be … chosen by the whole people …" (8.12); "And I James, the brother of John, the son of Zebedee say, that the deacon shall immediately say …" (8.12); "Concerning the ordination of deacons, I Philip make this constitution" (8.17). And so on. The apostolic band contained in the first-person plural is not always the same throughout that text. Thus, for

example, 6.12 mentions the Eleven, Matthias, and James, but does not include Paul among the "we" who are speaking. Yet, in addition to the twelve, Paul, James, and Clement all elsewhere speak in the first person.

Sometimes the author alludes to the lives of individual members of the twelve in the first person, as they occasionally speak out to say something to identify themselves, for instance, Matthew, who calls himself the tax collector (2.24.4); Thomas, the one who was lacking in faith (5.19.1); and especially Peter, who recalls his conflicts with Simon Magus (4.7.2, 6.7.4). At other times the author quotes the writings of the New Testament as if the apostles themselves were simply speaking the words (as opposed to him, the author, quoting texts); or he speaks of personal episodes rather than quotations of Scripture, as in 2.46: "It is also a duty to forgive each other's trespasses,… as the Lord determined when I Peter asked Him, 'How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him'"; or 5:7: "He … sent a piece of money out of a fish's mouth by me Peter…."

The point of all this heightened first-person narrative is occasionally hammered home, in case readers are too dull to figure it out for themselves: "We who have eaten and drunk with Him, and have been spectators of His wonderful works, and of His life, and of His conduct, and of His words, and of His sufferings…. We teach you all these things which he appointed us by His Constitutions" (5.7).

Scholars have long questioned whether the final document was compiled over time by a number of editors, or instead was the product of a single redactor's work. An early proponent of multiple redactors was Johann Sebastian von Drey in 1829;[49] the consensus today, however, leans toward a single redactor, for compelling reasons that are, however, of little moment for our present concerns.[50] There is also a strong consensus that the final product was made in Syria, probably Antioch, at the end of the fourth century. That date would accommodate the discussion of the minor church offices (subdeacon, reader, singer, deaconess, etc.) in 8.12 and, in particular, the list of festivals that includes Christmas in 5.13, since Chrysostom indicates in a homily of 386 CE that the Christmas festival in Antioch began to be celebrated ten years earlier.[51]

The Tendencies of the Author

There have been long, hard, protracted, and occasionally pointless arguments over the inclination of the author/final editor of the Apostolic Constitutions, especially of his theological proclivities.[52] The concern is not merely a modern one, as shown by Canon 2 of the Trullanum (692–93 CE), which was quoted at

the outset of this study, but which is of sufficient relevance to warrant quoting again:

> It has also seemed good to this holy Council, that the eighty-five canons, received and ratified by the holy and blessed Fathers before us, and also handed down to us in the name of the holy and glorious Apostles should from this time forth remain firm and unshaken for the cure of souls and the healing of disorders. And in these canons we are bidden to receive the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles [written] by Clement. But formerly through the agency of those who erred from the faith certain adulterous matter was introduced, clean contrary to piety, for the polluting of the Church, which obscures the elegance and beauty of the divine decrees in their present form. We therefore reject these Constitutions so as the better to make sure of the edification and security of the most Christian flock; by no means admitting the offspring of heretical error, and cleaving to the pure and perfect doctrine of the Apostles.[53]

From the outset of the critical investigation, it was believed that the passages in question ("certain adulterous matter") were Arian, a view that dominated until the pivotal investigations of F. Funk, who argued that the author was in fact orthodox, with Apollinarian tendencies.[54] One upshot was that the text in its final form would likely date later than normally understood, sometime in the fifth century. Funk's view was in turn attacked by C. H. Turner, who pushed for the traditional view that the author/editor was Arian,[55] a view supported in the next generation with additional argumentation by Bernard Capelle.[56] Later still, in 1972, Georg Wagner claimed specifically that the author was a neo-Arian of the Eunomian type, that in fact Eunomius was the possible author.[57]

A different approach to studying the theological comments of the author/redactor involved making a more precise identification by associating him with other writings from the same period. In particular it had been argued as far back as James Ussher in 1644 that the author of the Apostolic Constitutions also forged the Pseudo-Ignatian letters.[58] Objections were raised to the identification over the years, but the view was put on firmer ground by the great Harnack.[59]

The conclusion was made even more certain by Dieter Hagedorn, who, in a 1973 edition of a late-fourth-century Arian commentary on the book of Job,

explored thirty-five points of contact that it shared with the Apostolic Constitutions.[60] On some occasions, in dealing with the same topics, the two works use precisely the same somewhat unusual phrases. Hagedorn pointed to three explanations that could be adduced for these parallels: the two (different) authors used the same source; or one of them edited the work of the other; or they were the same person. He went on to argue that the final option was most plausible.[61]

One significant result of this conclusion is that the author of the Job commentary actually identifies himself. He was named Julian. Whoever Julian was, he also compiled the Apostolic Constitutions and forged the Pseudo-Ignatian letters. And from the Job commentary there can be little doubt about his theological views. He was, in Hagedorn's view, strongly "Arian."[62]

At the same time, it should be stressed that the inability of scholars to mount a compelling and definitive demonstration of the theological tendencies of the Apostolic Constitutions themselves, based simply on the surviving text, shows that the author—probably Julian—did not have a distinctively theological agenda to promote in this particular writing, even though his theological views may have crept into the text at points. That is to say, he forged this writing—it is a redactional forgery—for reasons other than theology. This too is the conclusion of Marcel Metzger, editor of the three-volume edition for the Sources Chrétienne.[63]

Metzger's reasoning is compelling. The compiler of the work prefers to use biblical rather than philosophical terminology: terms such as ὀυσία, πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις, and their adjectives are missing from the account, as are the terms typically used in the Trinitarian controversies, such as ὁμοούσιος, ὁμοιούσιος, ἀνόμοιος, *etc.* Moreover, the author leaves out all incontestably "Arian" theological terms and phrases, and does not provide any trace of a polemic against Nicene orthodoxy. These linguistic facts are hard to explain if the writing was, in fact, meant to serve as a piece of Arian propaganda. Instead, the polemical emphasis, in Metzger's opinion, resides in what we earlier considered, an attack on Judaism and Jewish Christianity, or more specifically against views such as those found in the Pseudo-Clementines. In Metzger's opinion, the theology of the book, when examined in se, is simply some form of late Origenism.[64]

This view did not go down well with reviewers who had difficulty believing that an Arian might well be interested in discussing something other than Christology—such as church liturgy, church offices, and church discipline. And so, T. Kopecek complains that Metzger devotes only thirty pages of his

introduction to a discussion of the theology of the Apostolic Constitutions, but twice as many to an account of its institutional and liturgical descriptions.[65] In response it might be pointed out that this is, after all, what the book is: a church order, not a theological treatise.

If Julian did not forge the Apostolic Constitutions as an “Arian” apologia, why did he stress his alleged apostolic credentials—far more than his most extensive source, the forged Didascalia, let alone the anonymous Didache and the Apostolic Tradition? The obvious response is that he wants to stress that his views about church structure and administration come with direct apostolic authority: “When ye have learned this constitution from us, ye who are ordained bishops by us at the command of Christ, may perform all things according to the commands delivered you, knowing that he that heareth us heareth Christ, and he that heareth Christ heareth His God and Father” (8.3.2). It is hard to appeal to greater authority than that.

In a sense Julian takes the matter further than his predecessors. As seen, a book like the Didascalia uses Scripture to support its own apostolic claims, showing that the apostles who produced the sacred texts are now speaking with an equally authoritative voice in this text. Julian, on the other hand, has the apostles declare that his own book is Scripture. As seen at the climax, in canon 85 (8.47), the Apostolic Constitutions itself is one of the books of the New Testament, as are the two books produced by its carrier and authenticator, Clement of Rome. Moreover, by warning its readers against the “spurious books of the ungodly” on two occasions (6.16.1, 8.47.60), the author assures his readers that even though there may be forged books in the names of the apostles out there, this is not one of them. This one, indeed, comes from the apostles themselves. “The warning against pseudepigraphal writings that appears twice in the Apostolic Constitution should be considered the strongest argument in favor of its authenticity.”[66]

The Apostolic Church Orders

Date and Character

The Apostolic Church Orders was first published in 1692 by J. Leutholf, from the Ethiopic, with a Latin translation, in *Iobi Ludolfi (alias Leutholf dicti) ad suam Historiam Aethiopicam antehac editam Commentarius*.[67] J. W. Bickell published the Greek text, with German translation, 150 years later.[68] The most recent edition is by Alistair Stewart-Sykes.[69]

Although, as Steimer indicates, there is a broad consensus that locates the Apostolic Church Orders to the first part of the fourth century,[70] the consensus has been challenged by Stewart-Sykes, who argues that the nature of the polemic suggests a date (of the final redaction) a century earlier: “200–235 would be a reasonable suggestion.”[71]

The work is a composite text consisting of a two-ways teaching similar to that found in the Didache, but placed on the pens of the twelve apostles (chs. 1–15),[72] followed by a brief church order that deals with the appointment, qualifications, and duties of church officers (bishop, presbyters, readers, deacons, widows), as well as of laity and women (chs. 16–30), also given in first-person narrative by the apostles.[73] Stewart-Sykes, as is his wont, provides a complex source and redactional analysis. An earlier influential assessment of sources was made by Adolf Harnack.[74]

The Pseudepigraphic Character and Polemic

The forger opens his account by making an apostolic claim: “In accordance with the command of our Lord Jesus Christ the Savior we gathered ourselves together as he laid down for us” (ch. 1).[75] The first-person narrative recurs throughout the text until the end: “Peter said: ‘Brothers, we do not command these things as those who have the power to compel, but as having a command from the Lord’” (ch. 30). Several oddities have frequently been noted in the list of apostolic names given in the Preface: both Cephas and Peter appear, as do both Nathaniel and Bartholomew. Moreover, even though twelve names are listed, only eleven apostles are given speaking roles in what follows. The exception is Jude the son of James. Stewart-Sykes follows T. Schermann in thinking Jude was a late addition to the text by a final redactor.[76]

The only real polemic of the text appears in the strong emphasis placed on the minimal role to be filled by women in the church. Apart from the laity in general, they are the only group discussed that is not to be involved with church offices, and the restrictions placed on them are made quite plain. The discussion begins in chapter 24 with Andrew urging the apostles “to establish ministry for the women.” Peter suggests they consider the eucharist (ch. 25) and John points out that at the Last Supper, Jesus “did not permit the women to stand alongside of us.” Martha had said it was because Jesus had seen Mary smiling, but Mary indicates that she did not, in fact, laugh. Instead, Jesus had previously said “that the weak would be saved through the strong” (ch. 26). Cephas states that women are to pray sitting on the ground, instead of standing—possibly in order to

differentiate them from the men (ch. 27).[77] James concludes that the only ministry women can have is “the ministry of supporting women in need” (ch. 28).[78]

Although the discussion is not extensive—the treatise itself is quite short—it does appear that the work, like the Didascalia, is concerned to restrict carefully what women can do in liturgical service. Unlike the Didascalia, there is no office of widow or deaconess here. Possibly this text is earlier. It is certainly less detailed. Stewart-Sykes argues that the injunctions concerning women in chapters 24–28 were added by a final redactor to a previously existing church order, with one purpose: “The whole point of the discussion is to subordinate women’s ministry, and in particular to legislate against women’s participation in the celebration of the eucharist.”[79]

It is interesting to see Mary and Martha mentioned in the context of a discussion of women’s role at the eucharist. As Francois Bovon has pointed out, both women appear at the eucharist in the Acts of Philip 8.2, where Mary prepares the bread and salt for the meal and Martha ministers to the crowds.[80] Stewart-Sykes concludes that the passage “seems directly to speak to the situation envisaged by K [=Apostolic Church Orders], to the extent that we may suggest that K is a direct response to the liturgical role of women presupposed by Acts of Philip.”[81] He goes on to suggest that the author knew of Montanist groups, with women officers, and such Gnostic groups as produced the writings connected with Mary Magdalene, and he ponders whether the final redactor “is alarmed by the situation that obtains and, rather than recognizing that this is ancient tradition, believes this to be a Gnostic innovation, so using Gnostic tools (the dialogue) and anti-Gnostic tools (apostolicity) to oppose it.”[82]

Faivre agrees, concluding that in view of the role mapped out for women in the treatise, the pseudepigraphic authorship plays a decisive role in the theological claims of the text. The attribution of the church order to the apostles establishes the antiquity of the contents of the books, provides literary unity for the material, and “above all … gives to more recent materials an authority equal to that of authentic materials.”[83]

FORGED REVELATORY TEXTS

Several forged texts that can be grouped together as “revelatory” also reflect internal Christian debates over church organization and leadership. These documents all appear to have been forged, in part, to oppose aspects of proto-orthodox forms of Christianity. Two of these texts come to us from the Nag

Hammadi Library; the other is one we have already considered in the context of anti-Jewish polemic in Chapter Eleven, the Ascension of Isaiah.

The Ascension of Isaiah

As we have seen, the Ascension of Isaiah contains certain motifs otherwise widely associated with Gnostics, in particular, the ascent and descent of the Beloved, who changes into a new shape in each realm of the heavens and delivers the passwords necessary to be granted passage. On the whole, however, the book appears to be most closely aligned with proto-orthodox theological views, even if Darrell Hannah is right that these views are somewhat "naïve."[84] Included in a vision narrated in the opening section of the book (the Martyrdom of Isaiah) is a polemical passage that appears to be directed against the leaders of the author's community, who are maligned for downplaying the importance of prophecy for the life of the church, presumably in favor of more worldly oriented hierarchy such as eventually came to dominate the orthodox tradition (3:21–31).

Robert Hall has argued that in this polemic the Ascension reflects competition among various prophetic groups in its community. For him, the text "issues from an early Christian prophetic school in conflict with other similar early Christian groups."[85] In fact, however, there is little in the text to suggest that the controversy was between prophetic groups; on the contrary, the polemic appears to be directed against a (majority) group that spurns the prophetic activities of the author and his smaller community.

The passage in question is preceded by a summary of an Isaianic vision of the Beloved's descent, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, followed by the coming of the Holy Spirit (3.13–20). We are then told that "afterwards, when he is at hand, his disciples will forsake the teachings of the twelve apostles" (3.21).[86] The main problem in the life of the community will be its leaders: "many who will love office though they are devoid of wisdom" (3.23). Indeed, "many elders will be lawless and violent shepherds to their sheep…. They will have no holy shepherds" (3.24). The leaders will be covetous; and there will be "much slandering and boasting" (3.26). More important, "there will not be many prophets nor such as speak reliable words, except a few here and there" (3.27). As a result, "great discord will arise among them" (3.29). And possibly most significant of all, they "will set aside the prophecies of the prophets which were before me and also pay no attention to these my visions" (3.31).

The first-person narrator here, of course, is Isaiah, and it is passages such as

these that make the work an embedded forgery, as discussed earlier. The polemic of the passage is directed against church leaders who reject the authority of prophecy, both the visions of this Isaiah and of the other prophets of the church that arose before him.[87]

It is interesting to observe, in this connection, the movement away from charismatic authority in some proto-orthodox writings that discuss church leadership and organization. The Pastoral epistles, obviously reflect a very different ecclesial situation from, say, the Corinthian correspondence. In Corinth, the church was organized and run by those endowed with spiritual gifts given at baptism, including such revelatory powers as prophecy and speaking in tongues. Not so for the Pastorals, where the right to direct the church comes through the laying on of hands by the elders, given to those who meet certain standards and qualifications. Even the “prophetic utterances” that “pointed to” Timothy are ratified and brought under control of the “council of elders” through some kind of ritual of ordination (1 Tim. 4:14). Direction for this community comes from “scripture … preaching … teaching” (1 Tim. 4:13), not through relatively uncontrolled and uncontrollable prophetic utterance. Presupposed here is a hierarchical structure, which saw the apostle as the one ultimately in charge, then his appointed delegate, and then the ordained bishop and deacons. Such a community has scant space for ecstatic utterance or visions to guide the life of the community, and it is not a stretch to imagine that the hierarchy was put in place precisely to provide controls for the kind of organizational chaos that could erupt under a more charismatic system, as indeed did erupt in the community at Corinth in Paul’s time. The Ascension of Isaiah appears to be reacting to this kind of relatively new “system,” so that we are well served seeing in it a counterforgery, in the strong sense, to the forged apostolic authorizations of church structure such as seen in the Pastoral epistles.

We can see the same movement toward hierarchical structure play itself out, more or less before our eyes, in the Didache. For this community there continue to be charismatic prophets who visit the churches from outside and give it instructions. But they are to be treated gingerly, and at this stage of the community’s history, somewhat skeptically (Didache 11–13). This is a different community from both those of the Pastorals and of the Ascension of Isaiah. But the same mechanics are involved in the development away from charisma and toward hierarchy. It is particularly striking in this connection that although the Didachist entertains healthy doubts about the viability of charismatic directives for the church, it also issues instructions for the community to appoint bishops and deacons (ch. 15), who presumably would be permanent and grounded

fixtures, as opposed to the wandering charismatics who were clearly being seen already as a problem.

The Ascension of Isaiah then presents a kind of counterattack against this move toward orthodox hierarchy. The settled, antiprophetic leadership of the church is peopled by covetous, boastful, and envious leaders who are "devoid of wisdom" and who move the community in the wrong direction. God speaks through the prophets—not merely the prophets of old, such as Isaiah, but through the prophets of the present day, who have visions of God and learn the truths necessary for the proper guidance of the community.

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter appears as tractate 3 in codex 7 of the Nag Hammadi Library. It can probably be dated to the early third century.[88] We will be looking at the work in greater length in the next chapter, since the principle thrust of its polemic involves its negative views of the flesh, over against the proto-orthodox insistence on the fleshly existence of both Christ and his followers. But there are also clear polemical charges leveled against the church hierarchy that this author, and his community, rejected, a hierarchy that has every appearance of being a majority, proto-orthodox church structure.

The Anti-Institutional Polemic

The author identifies himself as Jesus' own disciple at the outset of the treatise: "He said to me, Peter …" (7.70.20).[89] It is interesting to note the clear parallels between this Petrine forgery and others that are still preserved. The concluding portion of the treatise is its most famous feature, an eyewitness account of the crucifixion of Jesus, with a decidedly Gnostic twist. One cannot help but recall the words of the earlier forger of 1 Peter, who declared that he was "a witness to Christ's sufferings" (1 Pet. 5:1). The parallels with 2 Peter are particularly numerous, as I will note in a moment.

The author of the account admits that only a few of his readers will acknowledge his revelation and so come to saving knowledge. As the Savior tells him, "From you I have established a base for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge" (71.19–20). Those without this knowledge are "blind ones who have no guide" (72.12–13). It is, in other words, the revelatory vision of Peter, not the church leaders, that is to lead the people. And so we learn that those who teach the community, the priests and scribes who praise the Savior,

are “blind and deaf” (73.13–14). They think they are praising the Savior but they are instead blaspheming.

And they welcome as their followers those who “praise the men of the propagation of falsehood, those who will come after you” (74.10–12). These would be Peter’s supposed successors, who were presumably the leaders of the churches in his wake. But the members of the community “will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error and into the hand of an evil cunning man and a manifold dogma, and they will be ruled heretically” (74.16–23). Moreover, “some of them will blaspheme the truth and proclaim evil teaching” (74.22–25).

These church leaders proclaim what they think is truth, but they misunderstand what it is they preach; at the same time, they arrogantly think they have a corner on the truth: “some who do not understand mystery speak of things which they do not understand, but they will boast that the mystery of the truth is theirs alone” (76.27–34). What is more, “many others who oppose the truth and are the messengers of error, will set up their error and their law against these pure thoughts of mine.… They do business in my word” (77.22–78.1). The author then moves to specifics, making it perfectly clear that he has been referring to the appointed leaders of the (proto-orthodox) churches: “And there shall be others of those who are outside our number who name themselves bishop and also deacons, as if they have received their authority from God. They bend themselves under the judgment of the leaders. Those people are dry canals” (79.22–31).

These appointed officers of the church will be hugely successful. Peter fears that “there are multitudes that will mislead other multitudes of living ones, and destroy them among themselves. And when they speak your name they will be believed” (80.3–7). To this the Savior responds: “for a time determined for them in proportion to their error they will rule over the little ones” (80.8–11). But these leaders “say evil things against each other” (74.26–27) and they “are divided among themselves” (82.33).

The Targets of the Polemic

There is strong disagreement among scholars whether the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, in its entirety, is directed against only one set of enemies or is, instead, fighting battles on numerous fronts, with three or even as many as seven opposing groups in view.[90] What can be said, clearly, is that the main enemy of its polemic in the portions just cited is the proto-orthodox church structure with its bishops and deacons (and, as we will see in Chapter Thirteen, with its

doctrine of crucifixion rooted in an understanding of the need for Christ actually to have died in the flesh for salvation). How does one explain this anti-ecclesiastical rhetoric precisely on the pen of Peter, chief of Jesus' disciples, allegedly first bishop of Rome and hero of the proto-orthodox community?

The foundational study of the polemic of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, still very much worth reading more than thirty years on, is Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum*.[91] Koschorke argued that there are seven groups attacked in various portions of the text, but that they all can be subsumed under one major group, which consists of the leaders of the proto-orthodox churches. At stake ultimately is the struggle between the two groups, the Petrine Gnostics on one hand and the leaders of the proto-orthodox churches on the other. This is a battle over winning support from the masses of Christians.

Henriette Havelaar goes a step farther, arguing that the community behind the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter was a splinter group from the proto-orthodox majority, a group that started out within the community, developed "aberrant" views, was excluded from the community, developed these views further, and then entered into a polemical exchange with the larger group. Although Havelaar does not draw attention to the similarities, the model is highly reminiscent of the views of the Johannine community and its secessionists mapped out by J. Louis Martyn and Raymond Brown.[92] The model, in this case, would explain why both communities make use of similar traditions. The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, like proto-orthodox writings, uses a good number of the books that later became part of the New Testament; it focuses on the passion narrative and stresses the relationship between Peter and Jesus. At the same time, there are striking differences, precisely at the places of overlap, for example in the value of church offices and in the reality of the flesh and fleshly suffering of Jesus.

An even more specific proposal has been developed by Birger Pearson, who takes up the argument of Terrence Smith that there is a direct literary relationship between the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter and the pseudepigraphic 2 Peter.[93] Pearson maintains that Smith is wrong to think that the Apocalypse is a direct polemic against 2 Peter (if it were, it would be a counterforgery in the strong sense); instead he thinks the Apocalypse is reading the book of 2 Peter in a Gnostic way, appropriating its message, sympathetically, in a different context.[94]

In particular, Pearson is impressed by the fact that the Apocalypse portrays Peter as "the founder of the Gnostic community and the chief protagonist in a struggle against orthodox ecclesiastical Christianity." This is Peter, the founder of the Roman church, of all people.[95] It is also striking that the work makes

extensive use of materials drawn, evidently, from the Gospel of Matthew, which was otherwise used to establish Peter as the "rock" of the Catholic church.[96] But there are especially striking verbal parallels with 2 Peter, which Pearson lists at length. Most intriguing is the polemic against church leaders as "dry canals" (79.30–31), strikingly close to 2 Peter's polemic against those who "are waterless springs" (2:17). In Pearson's view, the author of the Coptic Apocalypse has slightly modified the image in light of "an Egyptian geographical environment."[97]

One is also struck by the "strong eschatological expectation" of the Coptic Apocalypse, which may not be expected in a Gnostic work. But judgment is said to come on the false teachers at the parousia; and nowhere is the parousia more in evidence than in 2 Peter. "Now we have a Gnostic text that not only contains a vigorous eschatological expectation but even uses 2 Peter itself in giving expression to it." Pearson cites a number of other parallels between the two texts as well, and concludes that the author of the Coptic Apocalypse has found 2 Peter "a very congenial piece of Petrine teaching, one that can freely be used in his own presentation of Petrine *gnosis*."[98]

The Coptic Apocalypse does not engage with polemic against the views of 2 Peter, however; instead, it uses the language and images of 2 Peter in order to attack the proto-orthodox ecclesiastical establishment. Here we have two Petrine forgeries, one building on the other and interpreting it in its own context in order to attack Christians who also use Peter for precisely the opposite purpose, to justify the church hierarchy that was destined to prevail within the early Christian movement. The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, then, is a minority voice in the struggle to establish dominance within the broader community. Its protests went virtually unheard, as the church refused to move away from a hierarchical organization, but in just the opposite direction, as Peter came to be thought of as the head of the church or Rome, the leader of all the churches of Christendom. It was the "dry canals" that won the day, and the Peter of orthodoxy who triumphed over the Peter of the Gnostics.[99]

The Paraphrase of Shem

The Paraphrase of Shem, the first tractate in Nag Hammadi codex 7, is another Gnostic apocalypse, although there are debates over its particular Gnostic allegiances. Given our limited knowledge of the followers of Basilides, it is difficult to conclude with M. Tardieu that the text is best understood as a Basilidean production.[100] The view of Michel Roberge appears more credible,

that even though the author "follows his own way," he appears to have been heavily influenced by both Sethian and Valentinian systems, the latter, in particular, because he embraces a tripartite anthropology comprising psychics, noetics, and pneumatics.[101]

The revelation in the text is delivered by the son of infinite Light, Derdekeas, to Shem, the son of Noah. For our purposes, it is important that the account is written in the first person, allegedly by Shem himself, "The paraphrase about the unbegotten Spirit—what Derdekeas revealed to me, Shem…. My thought in my body snatched me away from my race and carried me up to the summit of creation…. I heard a voice speaking to me, Shem, since you are from pure power…." (1.1–19).[102] Like other apocalypses, in other words, this is pseudepigraphic. The revelation involves both a Gnostic cosmogony and anthropogony, but then moves to a historical description of key salvific events: the flood, the overthrow of Sodom, the baptism of the Savior, and his ascent at the crucifixion, ending in two eschatological discourses and a description of Shem's ascent to the planetary spheres.

Of particular interest is the polemic of the work, which begins in 30.4–31.14 with the appearance of the "demon" who comes "to baptize with an imperfect baptism and to disturb the world with bondage of water." This is none other than John the Baptist, whose water baptism is a baptism "in error" and is described as "the baptism of the demon." This denigration of John's baptism sets up the discourse directed against the church's practices of baptism.

The polemical character of the account is evident in a revelation of Derdekeas to Shem in 34.16–36.24: "Many in the generation of Nature will seek the security of power, but they will not find it, nor will they be able to fulfill the will of Faith. For they are the seed of universal Darkness" (35.7–13). In contrast are "the perceptive." As Derdekeas reveals "I disclosed to them all the concepts and teaching of the righteous" (36.9–11). The others—those who are not perceptive and are tied to "the flesh"—will be led astray, thinking that baptism in water will save them. This becomes clear in the disparagement of Christian baptism by Derdekeas:

> Then many who wear flesh that leads them astray will descend into the harmful waters by means of the winds and the demons, and they are bound with the water. But water will provide an ineffective treatment. It will mislead and bind the world…. O Shem, people are deceived by the many forms of demons, and they think that through the baptism of unclean water this substance that is dark, feeble, ineffective, and

> disturbing will take away sins. They do not know that coming from the water and going to the water are bondage, error, defilement, envy, murder, adultery, false witness, heresies, robberies, lusts, babbling, wrath, bitterness. (36.25–38.28)

The upshot of this revelation then becomes clear: "I proclaim to those who have a mind that they must abandon defiled baptism … for where water has been invoked, there is Nature with a ritual formula, a lie, and injury."

There follows a peculiar description of the beheading of a female figure "Rebouel." The gruesome act, however, is presented as a good thing. Rebouel has "the perception you will reveal upon the earth," and so Shem can proclaim, "Blessed is Rebouel among all generations of people, for you alone have seen and will listen" (40.12–15). What is the meaning of her beheading? Roberge argues, "Just as Rebouel is declared blessed in her beheading, so the noetics should not hesitate to separate from the great church (early orthodoxy) which practices baptism, and enter the community of those who possess gnosis."[103]

This, in short, is another case of Gnostic polemic against proto-orthodoxy, one that in particular rejects the practice of baptism: "the writing is best explained as the product of a group living on the fringe of Christianity and urging the members of the great church to separate and join the community of those who possess gnosis."[104] It is impossible to identify the target of the attack with any greater specificity; but it is worth noting, with J.-D. Dubois, that the polemic accords well with the two treatises that follow the Paraphrase of Shem in codex 7, the anonymous Second Treatise of the Great Seth and the forged Apocalypse of Peter, which we have already considered. In Dubois's opinion, it is probably no accident that these three polemical attacks on proto-orthodoxy are grouped together in the codex.[105]

1. See the discussion on pp. 172–74.

2. See the discussion on pp. 218–22.

3. Günter Haufe, "Gnostische Irrlehre und ihre Abwehr in den Pastoralbriefen," in *Gnosis und Neues Testament: Studien aus Religionswissenschaft und Theologie*, ed., Karl-Wolfgang Tröger (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1973), pp. 325–39, argued that all three were combating the same opponents, and they were Gnostic (p. 325). The most influential twentieth-century spokesperson in support of this view of the corpus Pastorale is Peter Trummer, "Corpus Paulinum—Corpus Pastorale"; for him, the Pastorals were by a single author and were meant as a conclusion for the Pauline corpus. Even more extreme is Gerd Häfner, "Das Corpus Pastorale," who

argued, contrary to recent claims of such scholars as L. T. Johnson and W. Richards, that the Pastorals were generated and were meant to be read as a corpus of writings; the corpus is not an epistolary novel, but it has some of the characteristics of the genre, and the books are to be read in the order 1 Timothy–Titus–2 Timothy. Moreover, the claim that no single opponent emerges when the three are taken together as a unit, Häfner avers, is not necessarily true. Everything said about opponents can be subsumed under some such category as "Jewish-Christian Gnosis." The idea that the letters could be read as an epistolary novel was most influentially advanced by Richard Pervo, "Romancing an Oft-Neglected Stone: The Pastoral Epistles and the Epistolary Novel," *Journal of Higher Criticism*, 1 (1994): 25–47. Among the very basic problems of the thesis was the fact that Pervo was forced to argue that the entire "genre" of epistolary novel contains but one work, the letters of Chion of Heraclea. How can there be a genre of *one* writing? (He did allow that the Socratic letters were related, but not closely.) Moreover, the differences, as Pervo pointed out, between the Pastorals and the letters of Chion are stark: the Pastorals are a good deal longer, two of the three do not carry much of the narrative, and their coherence is not progressive, sequential, and narratological. As a conclusion, Pervo states that if the author of the Pastorals wanted to write a work of the genre, he "was not very successful" (p. 40).

4. *Difference and Distance*.

5. The most careful analysis, methodologically, is Jerry Sumney, *"Servants of Satan*." See my comments on p. 215.

6. On the problem of the polemical stereotypes, see the now-classic article of Robert J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *JBL* 92 (1973): 549–63; and Luke Timothy Johnson, "II Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Reexamination," *JRS* 6 (1978): 1–26.

7. See p. 207.

8. There is an obvious connection (although it is not as obvious what to do with it) between 1:15, πάντα καθαρὰ τοῖς καθαροῖς and Mark 7:19, also written by a non-Jew, καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα. See also Acts 10:14–15 and Rom. 14:20.

9. See pp. 206, 211.

). One convenient way around the problem is to think of the γύναι and ἄνδρες of the passage as husbands and wives, in view of 3:2. Still, apart from the fact that it does not let the author off the hook—even here, wives must be silent and submissive, and exercise no authority—the immediately preceding context of 3:8–9 (men and women, not husbands and wives) makes the interpretation

implausible.

1. *Die fiktive Selbstauslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen/Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht/Academic Press, 2004); see also her shorter study, "The Fictitious Self-Exposition of Paul: How Might Intertextual Theory Suggest a Reformulation of the Hermeneutics of Pseudepigraphy?" in *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas L. Brodie *et al.* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 113–32.

2. Merz, "Fictitious Self-Exposition," p. 117.

3. Margaret M. Mitchell, "Corrective Composition, Corrective Exegesis: The Teaching on Prayer in 1 Tim 2, 1–15," in Karl Paul Donfried, ed., *1 Timothy Reconsidered* (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), pp. 41–62.

4. The strongest arguments are that the views expressed in the verses stand at odds with Paul's overall view that women could be active in the church—as seen in his comments from Romans 16, as an obvious example—and more specifically with his exhortation earlier in chapter 11, which is reconciled with the injunctions of 14:34–35 only with severe difficulty. The fact that the passage in chapter 14 flows even better without the verses in question exacerbates the problem. But the debates rage on. For a rather weak argument that there is textual support for the omission, see Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), ad loc. A recent study that supports the view that the passage is interpolated is Pervo, *Making of Paul*, pp. 46–48, with a nice chart giving the parallels of the two passages.

5. As often noted, it is difficult to understand 3:11 as referring to anything other than women deacons, given the context of 3:8–10 on the one hand and 3:12 on the other. But why then are qualifications for the women deacons not mentioned?

6. Translation of Stephen J. Davis, "A 'Pauline' Defense of Women's Right to Baptize? Intertextuality and Apostolic Authority in the Acts of Paul," *JECS* 8 (2000): 453–59.

7. Stevan L. Davies, "Women, Tertullian and the Acts of Paul," *Semeia* 38 (1986): 139–43. His argument is that unlike what Tertullian indicates about the work produced by the Asia Minor presbyter, the surviving Acts of Paul was not written in Paul's name, does not give Thecla the right to baptize, was not written to augment Paul's fame, and did not come to be held in disgrace among the proto-orthodox circles to which Tertullian belonged. See then the responses of A. Hilhorst, "Tertullian on the Acts of Paul," in Jan Bremmer, ed., *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Kampen: Pharos, 1996), pp. 150–63; and

Willy Rordorf, “Tertullien et les Actes de Paul.”

8. Hilhorst, “Tertullian on the Acts of Paul.”

9. H. H. Mayer, *Über die Pastoralbriefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913). Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983).

0. In addition to MacDonald, *Legend and the Apostle*, see Richard Bauckham, “The Acts of Paul as a Sequel to Acts,” *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*, ed. Bruce Winter and Arthur Clark (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993); pp. 105–52; and Carston Looks, *Das Anvertraute bewahren. Die Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe im 2 Jahrhundert* (Munich: Hebert Utz, 1999), pp. 435–52.

1. “Pastoralbriefe und Acta Pauli,” *SE* 5 (1968): 309. Rohde goes on to argue that the AP is not necessarily polemicizing against the message of Paul in the Pastorals, since there is so little direct polemic in AP, as opposed to Pastorals. Rather than being principally polemical—even if there are anti-Gnostic traces—the legends are by and large edificatory and entertaining. Rhodes’s view may be true, but there is little reason to deny that the views of the Acts are antithetical to those set forth in the Pastorals, and vice versa.

2. See note 19.

3. *Legend and the Apostle*, p. 63.

4. See note 3.

5. Depending, that is, on whether a forger can commit plagiarism, given the circumstance that he is not actually claiming someone else’s work to be his own, as he is writing it in the name of another. See p. 14.

6. See Joseph Mueller, “The Ancient Church Order Literature: Genre or Tradition?” *JECS* 15 (2007): 337–80.

7. See the full study of twelve texts in B. Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*.

8. Ibid., p. 344.

9. Ibid., p. 270.

0. Georg Schöllgen, “Der Abfassungszweck der frühchristlichen Kirchenordnungen: Anmerkungen zu den Thesen Bruno Steimers,” *JAC* 40 (1997): 55–77.

1. “An keiner Stelle deutlich, daß sie die Absicht haben, das Leben in ihren Gemeinden umfassend zu regeln. Von einer ‘prätendierten Universalität der Ordnung’ kann keine Rede sein,” “Der Abfassungszweck,” p. 64.

2. P. 69.

3. “Die Pseudepigraphie ist zudem ein deutliches Argument gegen die

Widerspiegelungstheorie: warum sollte eine Kirchenordnung, die nichts anderes im Sinn hat, als die Gemeindepraxis zu ‘verschriftlichen,’ dies nicht unter dem Namen ihres tatsächlichen Verfassers bzw. seiner Gemeinde tun, statt sich in die Gefahr zu begeben als Betrugsmanöver entlarvt zu werden?” … “Die geliehene Autorität der Apostel soll der Schrift die Verbindlichkeit verleihen, die der Verfasser bei einer orthonymen Veröffentlichung nicht hätte erreichen können.” Both quotations p. 76.

4. As Schöllgen argues elsewhere concerning the relationship of scripture citation and pseudepigraphic authorship in the Didascalia: “The apostolic frame obviously serves the purpose of making the Didascalia’s interpretation of Scripture binding vis-à-vis competing interpretations.” (“Der apostolische Rahmen dient ganz offensichtlich dem Zweck, die Schriftinterpretation der Didaskalie gegen konkurrierende Interpretationen verbindlich zu machen.”) “Pseudapostolizität und Schriftgebrauch in den ersten Kirchenordnungen,” in G. Schöllgen and G. Schölten, eds., *Stimuli: Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum*. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1996), p. 117.

5. See pp. 344–50.

6. Charlotte Methuen, “Widows, Bishops and the Struggle for Authority in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*,” *JEH* 46 (1995): 213.

7. *Didascalia*, p. 43.

8. Schöllgen, “Der Abfassungszweck,” p. 68; on Osiek and Methuen, see pp. 389–90 below.

9. A “not” has inadvertently dropped out of Stewart-Sykes’s translation of 3.1.1 (“Widows who are to be appointed: should be less than fifty years of age”!).

0. Carolyn Osiek, “The Widow as Altar: The Rise and Fall of a Symbol,” *SecCent* 3 (1983): 168.

1. Methuen, “Widows, Bishops, and the Struggle for Authority,” p. 200.

2. “The Widow as Altar,” p. 168.

3. “Widows, Bishops, and the Struggle for Authority,” p. 203. Methuen argues as well that the Didascalia is specifically directing its polemic against a group of women as known from the Acts of Thomas.

4. Osiek, “The Widow as Altar,” pp. 168–69. See also Bonnie Bowman Thurston, “The Widows as the ‘Altar of God,’” SBLSP 24 (1985): 279–89.

5. See pp. 14–19.

6. For that reason I will not be giving them a separate treatment, even though they too are falsely written in the names of the apostles.

7. Thomas A. Kopecek, review of Marcel Metzger, *Les Constitutions*

Apostoliques, vol. 1 in *JTS* 38 (1987): 209.

8. Translation of James Donaldson in *ANF*.

9. “Über die apostolischen Constitutionen, oder neue Untersuchungen über die Bestandtheile, Entstehung und Zusammensetzung, und den kirchlichen Werth dieser alten Schrift,” *ThQ* 11 (1829): 397–477, esp. p. 410.

0. Compiled by Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 119–20.

1. “*Hom. in diem natalem Domini nostri Jesu Christi*,” in Migne *PG* 49, 351, cited in Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 121 n. 61.

2. See Metzger, *Les constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 2, pp. 10–110; Metzger, “La théologie des Constitutions apostoliques par Clément,” *RevScRel* 57 (1983): 33–36; and especially Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 122–29, to whom I am especially indebted in my survey here.

3. Translation of Henry Percival from Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *NPNF*, second series, vol. 14 (reprint edition Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994; American edition original, 1900), p. 361.

4. Franz X. Funk, *Die Apostolischen Konstitutionen. Eine literar-historische Untersuchung* (Rottenburg: W. Bader, 1891), pp. 105–7, 367.

5. “Notes on the Apostolic Constitutions,” *JTS* 16 (1915): 54–61 and 523–38.

6. “Le texte du ‘Gloria in excelsis,’ *RHE* 44 (1949): 439–505.

7. “Zur Herkunft der Apostolischen Konstitutionen,” in *Mélanges liturgiques offerts au R. P. dom Bernard Botte à l’occasion du cinquantième anniversaire de son ordination sacerdotale (4 juin 1972)* (Louvain, Abbaye du Mont César, 1972). For the views of S. Schwartz and J. Lebreton, see Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 125.

8. *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1644), LXIII–LXIV

9. *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel nebst Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1884), 244–65.

0. Dieter Hagedorn, *Der Hiobkommentar des Arianers Julian* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).

1. P. lii.

2. See further the discussion of the Pseudo-Ignatian letters on pp. 460–80.

3. “The view that the compiler and his school took recourse to pseudepigraphy for the purpose of surreptitiously imposing Arian doctrines and formulae is untenable in light of a complete examination of the Apostolic Constitutions and the local historical context.” (“Que la compilateur et son atelier aient recouru à la pseudépigraphie pour imposer subrepticement les thèses et les formules

ariennes, cette opinion ne peut tenir devant un examen complet des CA et du contexte historique local.”) *Les constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 2, p. 11.

4. *Les constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 2, p. 18.

5. See note 47.

6. “Als stärkstes Argument der Authentizität ist die in der CA doppelt vorkommende Warnung vor pseudepigraphischen Schriften zu werten.” Steimer, *Vertex Traditionis*, pp. 132–33.

7. Frankfurt am Main, 1691, pp. 304–14.

8. In *Geschichte des Kirchenrechts* 1 (Giessen, 1843), pp. 107–32.

9. *The Apostolic Church Order: The Greek Text with Introduction, Translation and Annotations* (Strath-field, Australia: St Pauls, 2006).

0. *Vertex Traditionis*, p. 65.

1. *Apostolic Church Order*, p. 78.

2. There is nothing to require Speyer’s judgment that the document was produced in order to replace the Didache. Instead, it simply gives the Two Ways teaching a different iteration, and combines it with a church order. See Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung* p. 223.

3. Faivre attempts to find clever connections between what each apostle says and what is known about that apostle from other sources (“Apostolicité et pseudo-apostolicité dans la ‘Constitution ecclésiastique des apôtres’: L’art de faire parler les origines,” *RevScRel* 66, 1992, 19–67). Thus, for example, Cephas speaks about the role of women in part because in 1 Cor. 9:5 he is connected with a wife; and Andrew talks about the symbolic theological connection of the deaconate between men (ANΔPAEI) and women. In most instances, including these two, the connections appear to be a considerable stretch and fail to convince.

4. *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel*, pp. 210–16.

5. Translations are taken from Stewart-Sykes, *Apostolic Church Order*.

6. T. Schermann, *Eine Elfapostelmoral oder die x-Rezension der “beiden Wege”* (Munich: Lentner 1903); Stewart-Sykes, *Apostolic Church Order*, p. 34.

7. Stewart-Sykes conjectures that the text originally involved an injunction for the women not to prophesy standing, lest they become physically out of control; *Apostolic Church Order*, pp. 113–14, n. 46.

8. Stewart-Sykes proposes an alternative translation, “supporting women in chains,” and suggests that if followed the passage may refer to some kind of exorcistic ministry, a view he then rejects.

9. *Apostolic Church Order*, p. 49. It should be noted that the polemic is not an

assertion of too much authority exercised specifically by deaconesses, as Jean Daniélou suggested (*The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, London: Faith Press, 1961, p. 20). As Roger Gryson pointed out (*The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1976, p. 48), deaconesses are not mentioned here. The office of deaconess instead may have emerged from just the roles to which women were restricted in documents such as this.

). "Mary Magdalene in the Acts of Philip," in *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*, ed. F. Stanley Jones (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 82–83.

.. *Apostolic Church Order*, p. 53.

!. Ibid., p. 54.

}. "Surtout, elle donne aux matériaux plus récents une autorité égale à celle des matériaux authentiques," "Apostolicité et pseudo-apostolicité," pp. 64, 66.

l. See pp. 335–37.

;. Robert G. Hall, "The *Ascension of Isaiah:* Community Situation, Date, and Place in Early Christianity," *JBL* 109 (1990): 289. Hall provides an interesting assessment of the text, but much of it comes through a rather flat mirror reading, in which any description of Isaiah and his school is taken to refer to the prophetic author and his real-life school. This is taking the approach developed by J. Louis Martyn for his reading of the Fourth Gospel to an extreme (see Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, New York: Harper and Row, 1968). For critique, see Greg Carey, "The Ascension of Isaiah: An Example of Early Christian Narrative Polemic," *JSP* 17 (1998): 65–78.

;. Translation of C. Detlef G. Müller, in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*.

'. It appears less likely that the author is objecting to the leaders rejecting the writings of the Old Testament prophets, since the focus is on "these my visions"—that is, the visions recorded in this very book, and hence specifically "Christian" prophecy made in the names of the prophets of old.

}. Thus Henriette W. Havelaar, ed., *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter (Nag-Hammadi Codex VII, 3)* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999).

). Translations are those of James Brashler and Roger A. Bullard in Robinson, *NHL*.

). See Havelaar, *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, ch. 6. For an argument that seven heretical groups are under attack, and that the polemic against the bishop and deacons is specifically directed against a Manichaean group, see Michel Tardieu, "Hérésiographie de l'Apocalypse de Pierre,' in *Histoire et conscience historique dans les civilisations du Proche-Orient ancient* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), pp. 33–39.

. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

2. On Martyn, *History and Theology;* Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979).

3. Birger A. Pearson, "The Apocalypse of Peter and the Canonical 2 Peter," in *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World*, ed. James Goehring *et al.* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1990), pp. 67–74; in reference to Terrence V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes towards Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1985), pp. 43–54, 137–41.

4. Havelaar is not convinced that there is any relationship between the two works at all. *Coptic Apocalypse*, ch. 5.

5. Pearson, "Apocalypse of Peter," p. 68.

6. For use of NT materials in the Apocalypse of Peter, see Havelaar, *Coptic Apocalypse*, ch. 5.

7. P. 71.

8. P. 71.

9. Some scholars have argued that the Apocryphon of James from codex 1 of the Nag Hammadi Library has a polemical bent similar to the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter. Madeleine Scopello in particular has urged that the figure of Peter in the text is portrayed as a somewhat dull and unreceptive recipient of Jesus' revelation, in contrast to the hero of the text, James. In this view, the ultimate point of the text is that Gnostics require no intermediaries for salvation, unlike the members of the proto-orthodox church, who require the ecclesiastical structure to be saved. This may, however, be an overreading of the book in a polemical direction not warranted by the text itself. (Madeleine Scopello, "The Secret Book of James," Introduction in Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, pp. 19–22.) By contrast, see also Donald Rouleau, *L'Épître apocryphe de Jacques (NH I, 2)*, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section "Textes" 18 (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain: Peeters, 1987), pp. 25–27, who stresses that in the account, Peter as well as James is set apart by Jesus to receive his revelation, and they both receive it equally; the other disciples ask both of them what the revelation was at the end, and they both reply and give the right answer. It is true that Peter betrays a misunderstanding of Jesus, but James too is represented as not comprehending Jesus and his message (chs. 5–6).

0. "Commemoration gnostique de Sem." In *La commemoration*, ed. Ph. Gignoux (Louvain: Peeters, 1988), pp. 219–23. Tardieu dates the text to the end of the fourth century, as an attack on the post-Constantinian church.

1. “The Paraphrase of Shem,” in Marvin Meyer, ed., *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, pp. 437–47.

2. Translations are taken from Roberge, “Paraphrase of Shem.”

3. Ibid., p. 445.

4. P. 445. Roberge goes on to make the less plausible suggestion that the polemic may instead have focused on Elchasaites, with their practice of multiple baptisms and therapeutic baths.

5. J.-D. Dubois, “Contribution à l’interprétation de la Paraphrase de Sem,” *Deuxième journée d’études coptes* (Louvain: Peeters, 1986), pp. 150–60.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Forgeries Involving Debates over the Flesh

None of the theological controversies of the second and third Christian centuries was as heated or prolonged as the debate over the status of the flesh, both the real flesh of Jesus before and after his resurrection and the flesh of his followers, alternately spurned and embraced by Christians of varying persuasion. The debates over the flesh were carried out not only in the realm of the heresiological literature—with famous stands taken by such stalwart advocates of orthodoxy as Irenaeus and Tertullian—but also within a surprising number of forged texts from the period. We have, as a result, apostolic pseudepigrapha that take positions on both ends of the spectrum, some arguing against the "grotesque" notion that Christ was a man of real flesh and that his resurrection—and that of his followers—involved a reanimation of the flesh, and others arguing with equal vehemence the opposite view, that Christ's incarnation was fully in the flesh, as was his resurrection, in anticipation of the fleshly resurrection of his followers, yet to be. As might be expected, we have fewer surviving representatives of the former position, in no small measure because its supporters succumbed and their literary advocacies were, as a result, relegated to the trash heaps of perverse theological curiosities. We begin with these few apostolic denigrations of the flesh.

FORGERIES THAT OPPOSE THE FLESH

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter

I have already discussed one important aspect of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter in the preceding chapter, as this striking revelation to Peter of the true nature of the crucifixion of Jesus was written, in no small measure, to oppose the hierarchical developments within the proto-orthodox community. The treatise attacks not only church leaders, however, but also anyone who maintains that Christ was really a man of the flesh, whose bodily torment and death had any role to play in human salvation. It is no accident that the separationist Christology of the text—in which a clear demarcation is made between the fleshly shell of the Savior and his true inner essence—is placed on the pen of

Peter, otherwise celebrated as the leader of the proto-orthodox community that this author opposes.

Peter and True Insight

The Petrine authorship of the book is established in its opening sentence, “As the Savior was sitting in the temple … he said to me, ‘Peter, blessed are those above belonging to the Father. …’”[1] One is immediately drawn to parallels in the canonical traditions, especially the apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13, given at the explicit request of Peter and other disciples while overlooking the Temple. The connections to 1 Peter (whose author was “a witness to Christ’s sufferings”) and yet more extensively 2 Peter, have already been discussed.

Early on in the treatise the polemical tone is set. It is the ones who “belong to the Father” who are blessed; and Peter is reminded that the Savior intended that those “who are from the life … may hear my word and distinguish words of unrighteousness and transgression of law from righteousness” (70.24–32). And so there is a clear difference between the true teaching of the Savior and teachings that derive from elsewhere. So too these sundry teachings differentiate groups of alleged followers from one another. Only a few (the “remnant”) hear the true revelation of Christ and so come to saving knowledge: “From you I have established a base for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge” (71.19–21). Those without this knowledge are “blind ones who have no guide” (72.12–13). These “others” are polemicized against throughout: they “say evil things against each other” (74.26–27) and “are divided among themselves” (82.33). The object of attack, as we have seen, is the proto-orthodox community headed by the deceived “bishops and deacons” (79.25–26).

The group is misguided not only because they follow blind leaders who are “dry canals” (79.31) but even more because they subscribe to false views, insisting on the importance of the fleshly body of Christ and on the salvific significance of his death. Looking only to the externals, they do not see the true, inner, hidden meaning of both Christ and his crucifixion. To illustrate this problem at the outset, the author presents the strange scene in which the Savior instructs Peter to see precisely by putting his hands over his eyes, and to hear by placing his hands over his ears (72.10–73.22). After an initial confusion, Peter comes to understand the point. What seems to be happening in the physical world of sensation in fact masks what is really happening, as can be detected not through the physical senses, which need to be obliterated, but through spiritual insight, which comes only when one turns from the outward and physical. Only some people can see: those who abandon the importance of flesh and the

physical nature of existence. It is those who look with their physical eyes who are blind ("If you want to know their blindness, put your hands upon your eyes … and say what you see"; 72.13–17).

The Christological Polemic

The primary target of the author's polemic is the false teaching about the importance of Christ's (real) death. The blind leaders of the opposition, and their followers, called the "men of the propagation of falsehood" err because they "cleave to the name of a dead man, thinking that they will become pure" (74.11–15). That is to say, they think that it is the crucifixion that brings salvation (the dead Jesus instead of the living one). On the contrary, those who hold such views "will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error and into the hand of an evil cunning man and a manifold dogma and they will be ruled heretically" (74.16–22).

The alternative Christology proposed by the author is not, strictly speaking, docetic (i.e. phantasmal), but separationist, in which the outer shell of the man Jesus, which gets crucified, is of no ultimate significance for salvation; it is the real Jesus, the inner spiritual being, that matters.[2] That the suffering of the shell has no connection with the real savior is a view found in other Nag Hammadi treatises as well, including the First Apocalypse of James (5.3, 5.31.17–18), the Second Apocalypse of James (5.4), and the Letter of Peter to Philip (8.2).[3] The view is portrayed with particular poignancy here, in the famous culminating scene of the tractate, where Peter observes the crucifixion of Jesus from afar, while speaking to the Savior:

> When he had said those things, I saw him seemingly being seized by them. And I said, "What do I see, O Lord, that it is you yourself whom they take, and that you are grasping me? Or who is this one glad and laughing [above] the tree. And is it another one whose feet and hands they are striking?"
>
> The Savior said to me, "He whom you saw [above] the tree, glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute, being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness." (81.3–23)

To his increased amazement, Peter then sees "someone about to approach us resembling him, even him who was laughing." This one was filled "with a Holy Spirit" and is also said to be the Savior. "And there was a great ineffable light

around them and the multitude of ineffable and invisible angels blessing them." This one—seemingly yet another image of Christ—explains:

> He whom they crucified is the first-born, and the home of demons, and the stony vessel in which they dwell, of Elohim, of the cross, which is under the Law. But he who stands near him is the living Savior, the first in him, whom they seized and released, who stands joyfully looking at those who did him violence, while they are divided among themselves. Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. But I am the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual Pleroma. (82.4–83.13)

There are numerous well-known ambiguities about this passage. Among other things, although interpreters are broadly agreed that there is a clear and fundamental distinction made between the material body of Christ and his real spiritual self, there are strong disagreements about the nature and unity of the latter, with some scholars such as Luttikhuizen thinking that it (the nonmaterial part) consists of two essences, corresponding more or less to soul and spirit, and others such as Havelaar who speak of a "tripartite Savior," comprising the "intellectual Pleroma," the "intellectual or Holy Spirit" and the "incorporeal body or living Savior" that is connected to the material body.[4] This disagreement is not of vital significance for my purposes here. What matters instead is the differentiation drawn between the material part of Christ, which is crucified, and the spiritual part(s), which cannot and do not suffer. The fleshly part of Christ is "the home of demons" and belongs to "Elohim" the creator God of this world. It is of no real importance to the living Jesus. Those who think they can harm the living Jesus are "blind" and do not "know what they are saying" (81.30–32). That is why the Savior "laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are blind" (83.1–3). The opponents of Christ think they have destroyed the Savior, but in fact they have only put themselves to shame. It is not the fleshly body of Jesus—and thus his physical death—that ultimately matters. That was a charade. What matters is the inner Jesus, the spiritual Savior who escapes torment and cannot be killed.

So too with the followers of the Savior. Their material flesh is not what matters. What matters is the spirit within. And so, as Havelaar notes, the crucifixion of Jesus is "an example of the repudiation of the material world."[5]

One of the striking features of the passage is the Savior who laughs at his own crucifixion. We meet this image elsewhere, most notably in the Gospel of Basilides, unfortunately no longer extant, but mentioned by Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer*. 1.24.4), and in the Second Treatise of the Great Seth (7.62.27–64.20). The idea that the Savior could be killed was, for many Gnostics, completely risible. Jesus laughs for other, but related, reasons four times in the Gospel of Judas. A comparable motif occurs in the "Gnostic" chapters of the Acts of John, where John is portrayed as laughing at the wooden cross. A similar view, without such humor, occurs in the Letter of Peter to Philip, which insists that Jesus was "a stranger to these sufferings" (8.139.21–11). As with this final instance, the authority of such views was significantly heightened when expressed not simply as a trustworthy revelation of secret knowledge, but pseudepigraphically in the name of one who would know. In the Coptic Apocalypse it is to Simon Peter, Jesus' closest disciple, the foundation on which, allegedly, the (proto-orthodox) church was built, that Jesus reveals his true spiritual nature and the complete insignificance of his material, fleshly existence.

False Teachers and False Teachings

It is central to the understanding of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter that its two parts—the revelation of Jesus concerning the false teachers of the church and the vision of Peter revealing the false understandings of Christ's material nature—are linked thematically by ideas of knowledge and ignorance. The church leaders who are misled and who mislead others are like those who crucify Jesus, thinking that they know the truth when in fact they are misled by appearances. The ultimate reality is not material but spiritual. The church leaders are blind and ignorant, people of the flesh instead of the spirit, devoted to the creator Elohim and so enslaved to the Law, rather than perceiving the true divine being who is the radiant savior.

These church leaders not only fail to understand the true God, thinking that he is Elohim, and Christ, thinking that he is a dead man: they also misunderstand Peter, who is the foundation for the "remnant" that has knowledge. Peter sees that Christ is not the "dead man" who was crucified, but the living, laughing savior who is an incorporeal body (83.7) and who was "released" from his flesh (82.30). Just as God and Christ are falsely proclaimed by the proto-orthodox community, so too Peter is falsely claimed in support of the community's errant theological and Christological views. The forgery of the book functions, then, not only to correct the proto-orthodox community in its doctrinal assertions but also to rob it of its apostolic foundation. The person claimed by the proto-

orthodox as the guarantor of the truth of its message shows that this message is rooted in ignorance, blindness, and error.

Part of this error is the claim that truth was anticipated in the Scriptures given by the God of the Old Testament. In fact, prior to the coming of Christ "they did not find him, nor was he mentioned among any generation of the prophet. He has now appeared among these, in him who appeared, who is the Son of Man" (71.6–12). It is not the scriptures of Elohim that reveal Christ, as the proto-orthodox insist. Only Christ himself reveals the truth of God. And it has nothing to do with the material world of the creator.

This pseudonymous attack on materiality, on the significance of Jesus' real bodily death, and on the world of the flesh comes to us as a minority voice among the extant Christian writings of antiquity. As we will see, the proto-orthodox position is, as one would expect, far better represented in our surviving remains. The onetime vitality of this Gnostic view should not be underplayed, however. The orthodox response was so virulent and extensive precisely because of the attractiveness and widespread effect that the opposition to the flesh had in the early Christian movement. Some of the proto-orthodox response came likewise in forgeries, some of them penned in the name of Peter, including at least one other apocalypse that he allegedly wrote.

The Book of Thomas the Contender

The Book of Thomas the Contender comes to us as tractate 7 of codex 2 from Nag Hammadi. It is generally recognized as a late-second- or early-third-century work, whose major theme, in the words of John Turner, is "unbending asceticism that condemns anything to do with the flesh, supplemented by the Platonic-Hermetic-Gnostic theme of salvation by self-knowledge."[6] The book allegedly records the words of Thomas as written by "Matthias," who could be either Matthew the disciple and Gospel writer or Matthias the apostle elected to replace Judas Iscariot after the resurrection. In either case, the work is pseudepigraphic, or, rather, doubly pseudepigraphic, as it purports not only to be written by an apostle but also to record faithfully the words delivered to another (Thomas). Thomas and Matthew are linked in other Thomasine writings (cf. Gospel of Thomas, 13) and other Gnostic works, such as the Pistis Sophia, where Mariam exclaims that Jesus secretly taught his revelation to Philip, Thomas, and Matthew (1.43).

The book comprises two parts, a lengthy dialogue between Jesus and his twin brother Judas Thomas, and a monologue delivered by Jesus (the final two-fifths

of the text).[7] The discussion is placed just before Jesus' ascension (138.23). In a way reminiscent of the Gospel of Thomas, it begins with "the secret words that the savior spoke to Judas Thomas" (138.1–2).[8] In this case, however, it is clear that Thomas is to be understood specifically as the brother of Jesus, as Jesus addresses "brother Thomas" (138.4) and indicates that "it has been said that you are my twin and true companion" (138.7–8). There is obviously no one better to receive the Savior's ultimate teachings about this world and the humans in it.[9]

The revelation is almost entirely about gnosis, self-knowledge:

> I will reveal to you the things you have pondered in your mind … examine yourself and learn who you are, in what way you exist, and how you will come to be. … It is not fitting that you be ignorant of yourself. … For he who has not known himself has known nothing, but he who has known himself has at the same time already achieved knowledge about the depth of the all. (138.6–18)

Whether or not one ultimately considers the book "Gnostic," there are certainly Gnostic terms and concepts in it: "depth of the All" (138.18), the Pleroma (138.34), the doctrine for the perfect (139.10), "you will find rest" (145.11); the Archon in charge of this world who will punish those attached to it (142.26–143.7). But ultimately there is no Gnostic mythology either explicated or underlying the views of the text. Instead, it presents a view of rigorous asceticism grounded in Platonic understandings of image versus reality, and a concordant denigration of the flesh. The book may well have been amenable to a Gnostic construal, and could conceivably have been produced, in its current state, by a Gnostic author, but its concerns are not distinctively Gnostic.

Of greater importance for my purposes here is the centrality of the "flesh" to the text. This can be seen at the outset, when Thomas asks to be told about the things that are invisible, leading Jesus to deliberate on the physical, visible (human) body that will decay, controlled by the blaze of lust and destined to perish and be lost (138.10–139.12, 33–37). This then is the point of the entire treatise; it is an attack on the flesh and on those who cave in to its fiery desires. And so human bodies are said to be "bestial" (139.6). Jesus teaches that the body survives by eating other creatures and so changes; but anything that changes "will decay and perish, and has no hope of life from then on" (139.4–6). Moreover, bodies come into being through intercourse, just as happens with "beasts"; as a result humans cannot beget anything that is nonbestial (139.8–11). The goal of existence is for the "elect" to "abandon bestiality," that is, escape

their fleshly bodies (139.28–31). For in fact, “the vessel of their flesh will dissolve.” And so Jesus pronounces a “woe” on those “who hope in the flesh and in the prison that will perish” (143.10–11).

One problem with those who live in and for the flesh is that they “suppose that the imperishable will perish too” (143.12–13); that is, they think that this life in the flesh is all there is, and that nothing survives the death of the body. And so Jesus pronounces a series of twelve woes on those who give themselves up to the desires of the flesh, who hope in the flesh, who are in the grip of the burning of lust of their flesh, who engage in sexual intercourse and do not receive the true doctrine (143.9–145.1). These woes are followed by three blessings for those who have “prior knowledge of the stumbling blocks,” who are persecuted for their message, but who “will be released from every bondage” (145.1–8). Jesus’ final exhortation sums up his urgent message:

> Watch and pray that you not come to be in the flesh, but rather that you come forth from the bondage of the bitterness of this life. … For when you come forth from the sufferings and passions of the body, you will receive rest from the good one, and you will reign with the king. (145.8–14)

As intimated in some of the preceding quotations, a controlling metaphor of the work is the image of “fire.” The illuminating power of the “light” of the sun is set in contrast with the “fire” that burns within human bodies and makes them drunk in mind and deranged in soul (139.33–37). This fire is the bodily passions, “The lust that scorches the spirits of men” (140.3–4). Ironically, this fire will “blind them with insatiable lust and burn their souls” (140.25–26). It is an imitative fire, which gives people an “illusion of truth” but in fact leads them to be imprisoned “in a dark sweetness” (140.21–24).

This passage is nothing so much as an exposition of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave: the sun, the fire, the people bound by chains who do not recognize the true light because of the effects of the fire, the ultimate contrast of images versus reality, and so on (*Republic*, 514–20). The heavy Platonism of the Book of Thomas is, in fact, evident throughout, as elucidated in particular by Turner: “In the Book of Thomas, the teaching of Jesus has become Platonized, while Plato’s teaching on the soul has become Christianized.” The “metaphysical axis” of the book is the Platonic opposition between appearance and reality; its hortatory force is the insistence that the soul must be set free from the bodily appetites that constrain it.[10]

In addition, there is a good deal of eschatological incentive in the piece, which Turner argues is also platonically inspired, but which may as well have come from the early Christian tradition. “Only a little while longer” and that which is visible “will dissolve” (141:14–15). When it does, “shapeless shades …. will forever dwell upon the corpses in pain and corruption of soul” (141.16–18). Moreover, people “will be thrown down to the abyss and be afflicted by the torment of the bitterness of their evil nature” because they “fulfill the lust of their fathers” (141.32–34). Those who do not come to the truth will find that the fire they follow (the lust of their flesh) will be “the fire that will burn them” (142.2). Those who reject the message of Jesus will be turned over to “the ruler above who rules over all the powers as their king” and he will cast them into the abyss and imprison them in “a narrow dark place” (142.28–35). These souls will be scourged with fire and find fire wherever they turn (142.42–143.7). The flesh may be destined for extinction, but the fire of its passions will burn forever.

It is clear that the forger of this text was involved in some kind of community conflict. The “woes” that are leveled against others are directed toward members of the larger community, those who refuse to engage in the ascetic life that Christ demands and instead value the flesh and so indulge in its passions. This polemical context is seen as well in 141.19–143.7, where Thomas wonders what to say to the “blind” people who do not agree with the teaching. The Savior replies that scoffers will devour each other and suffer horribly in the afterlife. And in fact there is little reason to try to convert the outsiders. This document is meant for those inside the ascetic subgroup of the community; those outside are “ignorant fools” and “blind,” and so beyond the pale. They place their hope in the flesh, and for that reason they will be punished forever, not raised to eternal glory. It is those who escape the flesh, and the demands of its desires, who will be liberated to enjoy a blessed afterlife.

The authority for these views is ensured by the identity of its authors. These are the words delivered directly by Jesus himself to his twin brother Thomas, faithfully recorded by the apostle Matthias.

The Gospel of Thomas

We have already examined sayings of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas in chapters dealing with eschatology and anti-Judaism. A third and final set of polemics evident in the text involves sayings that denigrate the flesh and the material world it inhabits. Six of the 114 sayings merit investigation.

Saying 29

When Jesus claims that "If the flesh came into being because of the spirit, it is a marvel"[11] he is almost certainly not referring to the "Holy Spirit" but to the spirit that resides within humans, set here in contrast to the human flesh.[12] It is difficult to imagine that flesh arose because of spirit, for example as a place of housing or imprisonment. But the option, that the "spirit came into existence because of the body," is beyond imagining. That would be a "marvel of marvels." Already Johannes Leipoldt recognized that this alternative does not mean that hearers should be struck with awe that such a thing has happened; on the contrary, "marvel of marvels" indicates that this is a hypothetical possibility that the saying rejects.[13] Read in this way, the three parts of the saying cohere and form an original unity, contra Plisch, who contends that part three of the saying—"I marvel at this, how this great wealth has come to dwell in this poverty"—as incongruous must not originally have belonged with the other two.[14] The parts do in fact belong together, and they function to show the denigration of the flesh as inferior to the spirit. "This great wealth" is the spirit; "this poverty" is the flesh—a completely impoverished existence. It is a marvel to the author that the greatness of spirit has made its home in such a pathetic vessel.

And so Valantasis is probably wrong when he claims that the saying's "problematizing of the world does not denigrate it, but makes it a place of wonder."[15] The world is, to be sure, a place where wonder takes place. But this material existence is itself impoverished and the saying maligns it. That is why, in saying 27, Thomas indicates that one must "fast from the world"; and it is why, as we will see, saying 56 insists that in fact this world is a dead "corpse."

Saying 37

We have already considered the meaning of this verse and some of the scholarship devoted to it in Chapter Eight.[16] In part the verse rejects the expectation of the disciples that there is to be a future apocalyptic salvific moment. But in championing an alternative perspective the saying undermines a basic assumption of futuristic eschatology: this material word and the physical bodies that people inhabit are to be transformed in a cataclysmic act of God. For the Gospel of Thomas, salvation does not come *in* the body through an act of future redemption; it comes *from* the body as people learn that this fleshly existence is to be superseded, and so escaped, in order to experience the joys of salvation. It is "when you strip naked without being ashamed and take your

clothes, place them under your feet like little children, and stamp on them" that salvation occurs. Here clothes are emblematic of the physical, material body inhabited by the spirit. It is only by discarding it and trampling on the physical shell of one's existence that the spirit can be set free, and so "will see the Son of the Living One, and … not be afraid."

Saying 56

The terse saying 56 arguably summarizes better than any other the Gospel of Thomas's understanding of the material world: "The one who has come to know the world has found a corpse; and the one who has found the corpse, the world is not worthy of that person." The world, when truly known, is recognized as a dead entity; those who come to this recognition are superior to the world because they are the ones who have life, as suggested, for example, in saying one.

It is only because DeConick insists on a thoroughly encratitic interpretation of the Gospel that she decides the verse must be textually corrupt, proffering as an emendation "Whoever has come to know the world has mastered the body. The world does not deserve the person who has mastered the body."[17] This, though, is a textual emendation driven by an interpretive principle. If the text is not forced into a procrustean bed of encratic thought, the logion makes perfectly good sense as transmitted. The material world is dead, not alive; those who know this will live and thus are superior to that which is dead. And so as Plisch can summarize, "Whoever comprehends what this world, the material world …, in its essence really entails, recognizes that it is dead," and so "this world recognized as a corpse is worthless for the one who has this comprehension."[18]

The saying thus has a good deal in common with the Gospel of Philip 73.19–23: "This world is a corpse-eater. All the things eaten in it themselves die also. Truth is a life-eater. Therefore no one nourished by [truth] will die."[19] It is also very close to the virtual doublet in Gospel of Thomas 80, which prefers the term σῶμα to πτῶμα for "body"/"corpse." The term σῶμα occurs only three times in the Gospel (sayings 29, 80, 87) and carries negative connotations each time. For that reason Plisch suggests translating it as "dead body" (i.e., corpse). Valantasis argues that in fact saying 80 and 56 represent two different Coptic renditions of the same Greek saying; but that would mean that the saying was literally repeated twice in the Gospel, which seems somewhat unlikely.[20]

Saying 110

Saying 110 is comparable. In this case a person is said to "find" the world, which

surely means, in the context of this Gospel, "finds the true meaning of the world." That person will "become wealthy" and then should "renounce the world." This does not mean that the person who acquires true knowledge of this world will thereby amass worldly wealth, although this apparently is not obvious to Plisch, who suggests that literal riches are in view here.[21] On the contrary, a person who discovers what the world really is—a corpse, as we have seen—has acquired great spiritual wealth far in excess to anything the world has to offer. That is why the person is to renounce the world: it cannot provide anything of value, especially in comparison with the great wealth that inheres in the true knowledge that brings life. Knowing the world must lead one to reject it.

Saying 87

Saying 87 provides a forceful statement that any dependence on the physical body leads to a wretched existence—whether it is another body that depends on the body or the soul that does. DeConick proposes an interesting alternative understanding of the verse, arguing that EISHE here does not mean "depend on" but "hang," in the sense of "hang by crucifixion," as the word is used of Jesus' crucifixion in the Coptic version of Matt. 20:19, Mark 15:14, Gal. 5:24, Heb. 6:6, Acts 2:23, and Luke 23:39. If so, then possibly the verse should be translated as "Miserable is the body crucified by a body. Miserable is the soul crucified by these together." As such, the saying means something like "the body suffers because of its own nature, while the soul suffers because it is united with the body." And so, "the point of the logia [87 and 112], in fact, is that *embodiment is a dire situation with suffering resulting for both body and soul*."[22] Parallels, as DeConick points out, can be found in Clement of Alexandria, who speaks of bodily pleasure and pain as "nailing" the soul to the body (*Strom*. 2.2; cf. the *Book of Thomas the Contender*) and talks of the soul that is constantly undergoing torture through its bodily sensations (*Strom*. 5.14).[23]

Saying 112

A doublet of saying 87 appears in the terser construction of saying 112: "Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul. Woe to the soul that depends on the flesh." The problem here is specifically the "flesh," denigrated as bringing woe, both to itself and to the soul. A comparable woe is pronounced in the *Book of Thomas the Contender* discussed earlier, "Woe to you who hope in the flesh and in the prison that will perish" (143.10–11). For both authors, flesh and soul cannot be dependent on each other, and neither can be redeemed by the other. The flesh

will perish but the soul can live on. Thus a person needs to strive to become, as the Gospel of Thomas puts it, “a solitary one,” renouncing the flesh and living as a soul, not dependent in any way on the material trappings of the body (see sayings 16, 49, 75).

FORGERIES THAT CELEBRATE THE FLESH

It should not be surprising to find that forgeries celebrating the flesh—both of Christ and of the believers—far exceed those that denigrate it. The side that wins preserves the texts. It is only through the lucky happenstance of the Nag Hammadi discoveries that we have been graced with the few forgeries discussed above. The winners, on the other hand, preserved one forgery favoring the flesh as part of the canon of the New Testament, two others that were considered canonical by some of the proto-orthodox at certain times and places, and several others that were widely popular in various parts of the proto-orthodox community.

First John

Like the book of Acts, the letter of First John is not normally treated as a forgery. And like Acts, the book is not pseudepigraphic. Its author does not falsely claim to be a (specific) famous person. But he does make a false authorial claim of another sort to validate and legitimize his account. By my definition that makes the book a forgery.

The Polemic of the Letter

To make sense of the authorial claim, we should first consider the polemical situation that the author addresses.[24] Judging from the author’s derogatory comments, it is clear that a group of onetime insiders have split off from the author’s (larger?) community, in part because of a harsh difference over Christology. The “secessionists,” as Raymond Brown has dubbed them,[25] appear to have embraced a docetic Christology, in many ways comparable to what was known perhaps a decade or so later to Ignatius of Antioch, and later still found among the followers of Marcion and some groups of Gnostics.[26]

The key passage is 2:18–19, which describes a group of “antichrists” who “went out from us.” Clearly, these “opponents of Christ” were once members of the community, who have now left. The author wants to insist that even though

these persons were once part of the larger group, “they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us.” The author calls them “antichrists”—the first recorded use of the term—because in his opinion they have adopted views that oppose Christ, a remarkable claim for a group of persons evidently committed to Christ. One hint concerning their aberrant view comes then in 2:22. These persons deny that “the Christ is Jesus.” It is not widely enough recognized among commentators that this denial involves an identification formula that answers the question “who is the Christ”?[27] For this author, but not his opponents, it is the man Jesus. But what does that mean?

It cannot mean that the opponents are Jews who do not confess the messiahship of Jesus, since the subgroup started out as part of the Christian community. They must, then, be believers in Jesus who have developed Christological views that the author considers tantamount to a denial of the community’s confession that the Christ is actually the man Jesus (cf. John 20:30–31). What those views might have been becomes clearer in a subsequent reference to the “antichrist” in 4:1–3. The true Christological confession for this author is that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” In contrast, “every spirit that does not confess Jesus” (i.e., “that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh”) is not from God. This is “the spirit of the antichrist.”

What matters for this author is that believers acknowledge that Christ really came “in the flesh.” Anyone who denies that view is an antichrist. The secessionists do not subscribe to a separationist view, such as that occasionally associated with Cerinthus, but a pure docetic view, in which Christ was assumed to be a phantasm, not actual flesh and blood.[28] That can explain why the author stresses the physical nature of the Christ even in the prologue, as we will see in a moment, and why he emphasizes, throughout his short letter, that it is precisely Jesus’ “blood” that brings expiation for sin (1:7, 2:2, 4:10, 5:6). The real blood of Jesus is needed for real expiation; there was nothing phantasmal about it.

In many respects the secessionists appear to embrace a Christology that comes to prominence some time later among the docetists attacked by Ignatius in his letters to Smyrna and Tralles.[29] These opponents reject the idea that Jesus Christ “truly” came “in the flesh” and was killed and raised (δοκεῖν) instead, they teach that he only “seemed” ἐν σαρκί; to be what he was and to do what he did (thus Ign. Smyrn. 1.1–2, 2.1, 3.1–3, 4.2, 5.2, 7.1; Ign. Tral. 9.1–2). For them Jesus was a spirit without a real body of flesh, who assumed the form of a human for a short while. It is significant that Ignatius stresses, on the contrary, that Jesus’ body could be perceived and handled (ψηλαφάω; Ign. Smyrn. 3.2), much as the prologue of 1 John emphasizes that the Word of Life could be heard

and handled ((ψηλαφάω).). An especially striking parallel occurs in Ignatius' condemnation of his opponents for "not confessing that he bore flesh" (Ign. Smyrn. 5.2, μὴ ὁμολογῶν αὐτὸνσαρκοφόρον),), which is closely parallel to 1 John 4:2 "every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ having come in the flesh" ((πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα).).

Moreover, just as in 1 John, Ignatius stresses the reality and importance of Jesus' real death in which he shed real blood. The opponents in Smyrna and Tralles are explicitly said to believe that Christ, who was not real flesh, only "appeared to suffer" (λέγουσιν τὸ δοκεῖν αὐτὸν πεπονθέναι, Ign. Smyrn. 2.2; Ign. Trall. 10.1), whereas Ignatius emphasizes that Christ truly ((ἀληθῶς)) suffered, died, and was raised, and that anyone who fails to believe in Jesus' blood is subject to judgment (Ign. Smyrn. 6.1) because Christ's real suffering is what effects salvation (Ign. Smyrn. 1.2, 2.1; cf. 1 John 1:7, 2:2, 5:6).

Thus the polemical emphases of 1 John seem to parallel those found soon thereafter in Ignatius' opposition to the docetic Christians of Smyrna and Tralles. There is no reason to insist that the targets of attack are one and the same, but the two sets of opponents do appear to embrace highly comparable views. Both of them claim that the Christ is not the "man" Jesus, that in fact Christ was not really a flesh-and-blood human. For both the author of 1 John and Ignatius, if Christ was not really in the flesh, he could not really shed blood. And if Christ did not shed his blood, there is no expiation for sin.

The Claims of the Prologue

It is this understanding of the opponents of 1 John that makes best sense of the prologue and its emphasis on the real, tangible appearance of Christ: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have beheld and our hands handled." The author wants to stress, at the very outset of his letter, the Christological theme that will play such a vital role in his harsh polemics. Christ was a physical being who could actually be heard, seen, and handled. He was no phantasm. But who, exactly, is the "we" who have heard, seen, and handled him?

To answer the question, we should first consider how the author uses first-person pronouns throughout the letter. On a number of occasions the first-person plural indicates the entire Christian community, of which the author is one: for example, "we should be called the children of God. … The world does not know us" (3:1–2); "we know that we have passed out of death unto life" (3:14); "they are of the world, we are of God" (4:5–6). In other places the author uses the first-

person singular, in all but one instance to indicate that he is the one writing to the larger community: "My little children, I am writing this to you" (2:1); "Beloved I am writing you no new commandment" (2:7); "I am writing to you, little children" (2:12); and so on. In these instances the author differentiates himself ("I") from his readers ("you"). This differentiation also occurs in several instances of the use of the first-person-plural pronoun. In some such instances the author differentiates between his readers and himself, even though they are all part of the larger Christian community: "you have heard that antiChrist is coming … therefore we know that it is the last hour" (2:18). More important, in other instances the author differentiates between his readers and a group of persons that the author includes himself among; this latter group is decidedly not the entire Christian community: "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you" (1:5). "We" in this instance cannot be "all Christians" because "you" includes Christians as well. The "we" then is a subgroup among the Christian community.

It is this latter kind of differentiation that is the key to understanding the first-person pronoun of the prologue. It is true, as noted everywhere in the commentaries, that the grammar of 1:1–3 is both confused and confusing.[30] What matters for my purposes here, however, is simply the first-person pronoun itself. In this case the author is not claiming simply to be a member of the entire Christian community who has "heard … seen … and handled" the incarnate word of life. He is a part of a smaller community that has had these tangible experiences involving Christ, and he is relating them to his readers. To begin with, that is evident from the graphic nature of the language—the community may have "seen …. and heard" Christ in a metaphorical sense; but they certainly did not "handle" him. As Brown has observed: "clearly the author is claiming participation in a physical contact with Jesus."[31] Moreover, and yet more compelling, the author makes a clear differentiation here between himself and his readers, between "we" and "you": whereas "we have heard … have seen … have looked upon … and handled with our hands"(v. 1), it is to "you" that the author has proclaimed these things (v. 2). Thus only some believers have been in real, physical contact with Christ, and can attest to his physical existence as one who could be observed, heard, and handled. And the author includes himself among this select group. In other words, the author is claiming to have been among the inner group of Jesus' followers who can bear witness to his real, physical nature.[32]

Except that he cannot be. He is an author living and writing long after the fact.[33] In asserting that he was an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, he is advancing

a false authorial claim. This then is a forgery, a book whose author claims to be someone other than who he is.

It is important to note that this way of reading the prologue is “normal.” Historically, the author—because of this passage—was taken to be an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus. The first explicit quotation of the Johannine epistles comes from Irenaeus, who cites 2 John on two occasions and 1 John once, evidently thinking they are the same writing, and attributing them to John, the Lord’s disciple (*Adv. Haer*. 1.16.3; 3.16.5, 8).[34] About the same time, the Muratorian Canon indicates that John wrote the Gospel and his epistles in which he indicates that he saw, heard, and touched Christ (quoting 1 John 1:1). Tertullian cites 1 John more than forty times and refers to it as the work of John. So firmly entrenched was the idea that John had written the anonymous three epistles that later writers who doubted they were by John the son of Zebedee were constrained to identify the author as a *different* John. As Judith Lieu observes, “there was never any alternative tradition of authorship.”[35] The view had lasting power, down to the present, as seen in some of the less critical commentaries, such as that of Plummer, who speaks of the author as “the last survivor of those who had heard and seen the Lord.”[36]

When more critical commentators—Brown, Lieu, Schnackenburg, and others—reject the idea that the author is claiming to be an eyewitness to the fleshly reality of Jesus in his public ministry,[37] it is almost always because they are convinced that in fact he was not an eyewitness. The fault of the interpretation derives from a failure to understand the world of ancient forgery. What we have in 1 John is an author who very much wanted his readers to think he was an eyewitness, even though he was not. In this he was following established patterns of forged writing from antiquity, seen already, for example, in the author of 2 Peter who was bound and determined to have his readers know that he really was present at the transfiguration of Jesus, or the author of 2 Timothy, who loaded his letter with verisimilitudes to make himself appear to be Paul, or, in fact, the authors of virtually all the pseudonymous documents we have considered. This author is simply applying the craft of the forger.

First John as a Forgery

The reason behind the false authorial claim of 1 John was keenly recognized by Strecker. Since the author is opposing “the false teachers who … represent a docetic Christology … it is important to assert the ‘empirical’ reality of the Christ event.” And so he begins the letter “with a testimony that the Christ lived

on earth as visible, audible, and tangible." It is true, Strecker concedes, that the author does not use a pseudonym. But "he is still writing this document under fictitious circumstances. He pretends to be an eye-and ear-witness, even though that does not correspond to historical reality." And his motive is clear: "such a fiction is appropriate to underscore the claims of this document and hence the author's intention to put the docetic teaching of the opponents in its place."[38]

It cannot be objected that the author would be known to his readers, on the basis of the evidence of 2 and 3 John, sent by the same author to a community of people who knew his identity. There is nothing to suggest that the letter of 1 John was sent to the same community,[39] or, more precisely, the self-same house church, as the other two letters. Indeed, there is good evidence that it circulated as a separate composition. Otherwise it is hard to explain why 2 and 3 John did not have a wider acceptance as authoritative texts early on. Origen, for example, knows of these two smaller letters but never quotes them, questions whether they are canonical, and observes that they are not everywhere accepted as coming even from the same author.[40] Brown concludes that the three letters were not transmitted as a corpus and that whereas 2 and 3 John were assumed to have been written by the somewhat shadowy "presbyter" John, 1 John was understood to have been written by the apostle himself. They may have originally circulated, then, in different communities.

In many respects, then, 1 John is a forgery comparable to the book of Acts. Both writings are, strictly speaking, anonymous. But both authors make false authorial claims through the use of first-person discourse, used in order to establish themselves as eyewitnesses to that which they testify. Both books, in other words, are what I have already termed "non-pseudepigraphic forgeries." In the case of Acts the author claims to be an eyewitness to the life and teachings of Paul; in the case of 1 John the author claims to be an eyewitness to the incarnation of Christ. The latter claim is made for purely polemical reasons.[41] It is directed against onetime members of the community who have created a schism and gone off to form their own community (assuming that it is they, and not the author's own group, who have left), due in large part to a variant understanding of Christology. The author buttresses the beliefs of his own (sub)community, that Christ was a real flesh-and-blood human, by writing an anonymous tractate, choosing anonymity not because his readers know full well who he is but precisely so that he can claim to be someone other than who he is. By assuming the guise of an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, he can provide the necessary authorization for the Christological views that he feels compelled to advance. Against those who claimed that Jesus did not "come in the flesh," this

author attests that he himself heard, saw, and handled Jesus, the "Word of Life" who "was made manifest" (1:1–2). As was the case with so many others, the author's false claims about himself were readily believed, and the book was eventually accepted as a part of sacred Scripture, written by Jesus' own disciple, John the son of Zebedee.

Third Corinthians

Within the short compass of the two letters known, together, as 3 Corinthians we find an entire range of vital issues related to early Christian debates over the status of the flesh: Is the flesh important in the divine scheme? Did Jesus have real flesh? Was he raised in the flesh? Will believers too be raised in the flesh? This final question is related to the issue addressed in 2 Timothy; here, however, the question is not simply about the fact of the future resurrection but also about its character.

The Textual Tradition of the Letters

The scholarly discussion of 3 Corinthians began with J. Ussher's mention of a lacunose Armenian manuscript in 1644.[42] The correspondence was not published however, for another seventy years, making its first appearance in a work by F. Masson.[43] The first critical editions were of the Armenian.[44] The book came into English through a translation by William Whiston,[45] later superseded by a rendition of none other than Lord Byron.[46] It came into German through a translation of W. F. Rink.[47] In most of the surviving Armenian manuscripts, the correspondence occurs as part of the New Testament between 2 Corinthians and Galatians.

The Syriac tradition is known through Ephrem's four-volume biblical commentary (which survives in Armenian translation), which D. Bundy argues is itself pseudepigraphic (falsely ascribed rather than forged).[48] Latin manuscripts began to appear at the end of the nineteenth century; we now have six.[49] The Coptic version, found in the Heidelberg Papyrus, was discovered by Carl Schmidt in 1904 and published in 1905.[50] Finally, and most important, the sole Greek witness, which, dating from the third century, is by far the earliest manuscript evidence, was found among the Bodmer papyri and published as Bodmer Papyrus X by Michel Testuz in 1959.[51]

Whereas earlier scholars such as Harnack believed that 3 Corinthians was originally part of the Acts of Paul,[52] today it is generally ascribed an

independent origin and circulation. For one thing, only the Heidelberg papyrus presents it as part of the Acts; the other manuscripts present it as part of the New Testament. Moreover, among the manuscripts of the Acts of Paul only the Heidelberg manuscript contains the correspondence. Still more important, there are clear anomalies between the narrative of the Acts and the letters. According to the correspondence, heresies present a grave threat to the Christians in Corinth; but in the narrative, once Paul arrives in the city there is no word about heresy. On the contrary, Paul is pleased with the progress of the Corinthian believers. Relatedly, during Paul's visit he makes no mention of an earlier correspondence and mentions none of the problems addressed in it. What is more, whereas Cleobius is presented as an arch-heretic in the Corinthians' letter to Paul, in the narrative he is portrayed as a spirit-filled Christian. And so, it appears that the correspondence originated independently of the Acts of Paul, as recognized not long after the publication of the Bodmer papyrus, for example, by Klijn.[53]

Technically speaking the correspondence consists of four parts: a narrative introduction to the Corinthians' letter to Paul, the letter itself, a narrative introducing Paul's reply, and that letter itself. As S. Johnston has conveniently summarized, different surviving witnesses attest each of these four parts. Our oldest and only Greek witness, the third-century Bodmer Papyrus, attests only the two letters themselves, without narrative introduction. On these grounds it is generally thought today that the sequence of composition and redaction was as follows: the letters themselves were first composed and circulated, narrative introductions to each were later added, and the whole was subsequently inserted into the Acts of Paul.[54] Luttikhuizen, in opposition to Testuz, has made a strong case that the Armenian and Syriac versions drew the correspondence from the Acts of Paul—rather than from an independent manuscript transmission—since they contain the second introductory narrative.[55]

The Themes of the Correspondence

As they stand now, the letters place a particular stress on the importance of the flesh: the fleshly existence of Christ, the fleshly nature of his resurrection, and the fleshly character of the resurrection of believers yet to come. In the first letter, allegedly written to Paul by Stephanus, Daphnus, Eubulus, Theophilus, and Zeno, we learn that two false teachers, Simon and Cleobius, have arrived in Corinth and proclaimed "pernicious words" that have destroyed "the faith of some."[56] In particular they have declared that

> one must not appeal to the prophets and that God is not almighty, there is no resurrection of the body, man has not been made by God, Christ has neither come in the flesh, nor was he born of Mary, and the world is not the work of God but of angels. (vv. 10–15)

Paul's response is more or less a point-by-point refutation, given at much greater length than the succinct summary of the false teachings themselves. As Paul has learned "from the apostles before me who were always with Jesus Christ," Christ was certainly "born of Mary … that he might come into this world and save all flesh by his own flesh and that he might raise us in the flesh" (vv. 5–6).[57] God is called both the "almighty" and the "maker of heaven and earth," and is said to have "sent the prophets first to the Jews" (v. 9). Salvation "of the flesh" comes through the (real) body of Christ (v. 16). Those who "assert that heaven and earth and all that is in them are not a work of God" are "not children of righteousness but of wrath" (v. 19). Moreover, "those who say that there is no resurrection of the flesh shall have no resurrection" (v. 24). Paul concludes his polemic by giving three arguments for the real, physical resurrection of the flesh: the sowing of seeds, the story of Jonah, and an apocryphal account of a corpse that was revived when thrown on the bones of Elisha (vv. 26–32). Those who accept this message, as "received by the blessed prophets and the holy gospel," will be rewarded; those who have rejected it will be punished with fire, "since they are Godless men, a generation of vipers" (vv. 34–37).

Third Corinthians as a Forgery

No one thinks that either letter is authentic.[58] There are, however, a substantial number of Pauline themes and verisimilitudes. Connections with 1 and 2 Corinthians in particular abound: Paul's tribulations (v. 2; cf. 2 Cor. 1:3–10, 11:23–28); the imminent appearance of Christ (v. 3; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51); Paul's claim that he delivered to the Corinthians what he also "received" (v. 4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:3); the body as a temple of righteousness (v. 17; cf. 1 Cor. 6:19); an attack on those who say that "there is no resurrection" (v. 24; cf. 1 Cor. 15:12); the resurrection compared to sown seeds (vv. 26–27; cf. 1 Cor. 15:36–37); the coming judgment (v. 37; cf. 2 Cor. 5:10). A large number of other Pauline words and phrases are scattered throughout: "prisoner of Jesus Christ" (v. 1; cf. Phil. 1:7, Phlm. 1); "seed of David" (v. 5; cf. Rom. 1:3); believers' "adoption" (v. 8; cf. Rom. 8:15–17); "children … of wrath" (v. 19; cf. Eph. 2:3); the "marks" that

Paul bears (v. 33; cf. Gal. 6:17); “that I may win Christ” (v. 34; cf. Phil. 3:8–9); “that I may attain to the resurrection of the dead” (v. 33; cf. Phil. 3:11); and many others. Clearly the author knows Paul’s letters and imitates their phrasing. In this case we are not dealing with a forger who is simply claiming to be an apostle and providing little “evidence” to support his claim (as, say, with the letters of 1 Peter or Jude). This author wants to sound like Paul.[59] Even so, as we will see in a moment, he fails miserably on several fronts.

The function of the forgery is to use the apostolic name to oppose heretical groups who denigrate the flesh and the fleshly resurrection. Over the years scholars have failed to resist the vain temptation to nail down the identity of the opponents with greater precision. And so, for example, Rist argued that the opponents were Marcionites of an Apelles sort: “the best organized and the most aggressive ‘heresy’ during the latter part of the second century.”[60] W. Rordorf proposed that the opponent was Saturninus;[61] M. Muretow held that it was Simon Magus;[62] Hovhanessian suggested the Ophites.[63] Most commonly, however, it is recognized that there is not a specific group of “heretics” in view, but a kind of teaching, found in various guises among the Marcionites and sundry Gnostics. This is the conclusion of Klijn: “we are not able to say that the correspondence was written against one particular kind of heresy. The correspondence probably describes a tendency in the early church.”[64] And Luttikhuizen: “we may be dealing with a *general* warning against the invasion of Gnostic ways of thinking into Christianity rather than with the refutation of a specific group of Gnostics.”[65] Or Johnston: the letter is an attack on “all the gnostic ideas that circulated during his era.”[66]

At the same time, given the popularity of Paul among both Marcionites and sundry Gnostic teachers, it is worth entertaining the idea that the author believed himself to be countering teachings that claimed support in Paul’s own proclamation. We have seen such a contest over Paul in 2 Peter, whose pseudonymous author objected to the “ignorant and unstable” false teachers who “twist” Paul’s letters “to their own destruction” (2 Pet. 3:16). Already in Paul’s own day we know of groups of his own devotees who, in his opinion, seriously misconstrued his message. This at least is true of one of the groups in Corinth who claimed to be “of Paul,” in opposition to others who claimed to be “of Cephas,” “of Apollo,” or “of Christ.” Possibly the most striking feature of the historical Paul’s intervention in this Corinthian dispute is that he does not side with his own party, but attacks them along with all the others for misunderstanding the true meaning of the gospel, even though this was a group that specifically appealed to his authority for their views.

Many of the themes of 1 Corinthians—especially, but not exclusively, those involving splits in the community—are replicated a generation later in the letter of 1 Clement, also written to Corinth, the church, remarkably, said to be the recipient of the apocryphal correspondence we are now considering. Like 3 Corinthians, 1 Clement is deeply concerned about the teaching of the future resurrection, and is invested in arguing for its reality in the face of those who denied it (esp. 1 Clem. 24–26). Both letters appeal to nature in support of their views: the claim, "if one will not take the parable of seeds. … " (3 Cor. 26), is not formally far removed from "he shows us the magnificence of his promise even through a bird" (1 Clem. 26.1). In fact, there is good reason for thinking that 3 Cor. 26 ("For they do not know, O Corinthians, about the sowing of wheat") is an allusion to 1 Clement 24:4–5 ("We should consider the crops: how, and in what way, does the sowing occur?"). Both passages are based on Mark 4:26–27; and there are several striking verbal parallels: βάλλω, τῶν σπερμάτων (Mark has σπόρον instead), εἰς τὴν γήν (Mark has ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς), and γυμνή (not in Mark).[67] Still, even though there is a literary connection between these two writings, it would be difficult to show, historically, that Clement's opponents were the same as 3 Corinthians docetists.[68]

What is clear is that Paul could be, and was, appealed to by various sides in debates over both the resurrection and the related issue of the status of the flesh. It is no accident that the Marcionites—harsh opponents of the flesh—appealed to forged letters of Paul to the Alexandrians and Laodiceans (according to the Muratorian Canon). 3 Corinthians can well be seen, then, as a kind of counterforgery to the views of certain Paulinists (Marcion and some Gnostics), and possibly to actual forgeries that they produced. It also counters the views found in certain docetic fabrications, such as the Acts of John and its remarkable portrayal of a phantasmal Christ (e.g., Acts of John 93),[69] as well as (possibly) Gnostic works not connected with Paul, such as the *Book of Thomas the Contender* considered earlier. And when "Paul" claims in the letter that "I delivered to you first of all what I received from the apostles before me who were always with Jesus Christ" (v. 4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:3), the forger provides an even more precise counterforgery to claims such as those found in the forged Epistula Petri and the book it introduces, the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, where Paul stands precisely at odds with the views of Peter, the one who was with Christ for his public ministry and knew Christ far better than did Paul, who acquired his "knowledge" from a brief and unreliable vision. Here then, in 3 Corinthians, we have a "Paul" who appears to be fighting against other "Pauls."

What is most striking of all is that this particular "Paul" stands at odds with

what we know about the real, historical Paul, at least as he is represented in the undisputed Pauline epistles. This has been shown above all by Benjamin White in his recent analysis of 3 Corinthians.[70] For one thing, the forged letter—in dealing with the question of Christ's nature—places almost no importance on the death of Jesus, and overlooks questions about the Jewish Law, focusing instead on the role of the Spirit in the teachings of the prophets. Of greater importance, the pseudonymous author embraces views found nowhere in Paul, such as the incarnation of Christ through Mary and the remarkable "proofs" of the resurrection through the stories of Jonah and the bones of Elisha. Most significant, however, is that the author presents views that stand precisely at odds with Paul. In particular, the author has taken Paul's teaching of the resurrection of the "body" ((σῶμα)) and transformed it into a doctrine of the resurrection of the "flesh" ((σάρξ).). As White has shown, the stress on "flesh" is not simply different from Paul, it is counter to Paul, who insisted that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). For Paul, the flesh is the fallen part of humans that cannot and will not be redeemed. It is the body that is to be raised, not the σάρξ.. As a result, 3 Corinthians represents a forged attempt to salvage Paul that does so only by altering a critical aspect of his actual message.

At the same time, the author was standing in a clearly demarcated line of Pauline tradition, as White has further shown. In particular, his views coalesce strikingly with the views of Paul found in the Pastoral epistles and in the somewhat later writings of Irenaeus. Here then we find the irony we have run across before. Paul is used to combat Paul; but it is a "twisted" Paul—to use the language of 2 Peter—that has been created in order to counter an otherwise "twisted" Paul.

Melchizedek

It may seem highly irregular to include a Gnostic treatise among early Christian texts that champion the flesh and oppose a docetic understanding of Christ, but that is precisely what we have in "Melchizedek," the first treatise of codex 9 discovered at Nag Hammadi. The surviving copy is a highly lacunose revelation to Melchizedek by the angel Gabriel that includes a liturgical rite spoken by Melchizedek. The original text comprised 750 lines. Only 19 of these survive complete, 467 are fragmentary, many of them largely so. The remaining 264 lines, over a third of the entire treatise, are lost altogether.

The pseudepigraphic character of the piece is nonetheless intact. The author

claims to be the famous but mysterious royal/priestly figure known from Genesis 14, Psalm 110, and Hebrews 5–7: “And [I immediately] arose—I, Mel[chizedek]—and I began to [glorify] God” (14.15–18);[71] “For I have a name: I am [Melch]izedek, the priest of [God] Most High” (15.7–10); “and they said to me, ‘[Greetings, Mel]chiz[ed]ek, [Priest] of God [Most High]’” (19.12–14). Whether in this tractate Melchizedek is to be identified as Christ himself, or as distinct from him, has been a matter of dispute.[72]

The book shows strong ties to the Sethian tradition, as seen, for example, in 5.17–19, “I [am Gamal]iel. It is to [snatch away] the assembly of the [children] of Seth that I have come.”[73] Among its Gnostic features are a myth of descent through the realms of the aeons (but cf. *Ascension of Isaiah*) in 1.1–5: “Jesus Christ, the Son of God … from … the aeons, that he might pass through all of the aeons and see in each one of the aeons the nature of the aeon, as to what kind it is, and that he might put on as a garment sonship and goodness….” Moreover, a host of Gnostic divinities are invoked by the piece: Autogenes, Barbelo, Aithops, Doxomedon, Domedon, Harmozel, Oraoiael, Daveithe, Eleleth (5.23ff.); and later Barbelo Doxomedon Harmozel, Oriael, and others (16.17ff.).

In view of the tractate’s Gnostic character, what is most peculiar is precisely its anti-docetic Christology, which luckily survives in one of the few intact passages, in a series of polemically contrasting statements:

> Furthermore, they will say of him
> “He was not born,” though he was born;
> “he does not eat,” though he does eat;
> “he does not drink,” though he does drink;
> “he is not circumcised,” though he was circumcised;
> “he is without real flesh,” though he came in the flesh;
> “he did not suffer death,” <though> he did endure suffering;
> “he did not rise from the dead,” <though> he did rise from the dead. (5.1–11)

As Birger Pearson has noted, the balanced set of contrasts compare favorably to other Christological statements found throughout the early Christian literature, of varying persuasion. One thinks most immediately of the famous contrasting claims of the Acts of John, which function to emphasize precisely the opposite Christological point (in favor of a docetic interpretation):

> So then I have suffered none of those things which they will say of me.

> … You hear that I suffered, yet I suffered not; and that I suffered not, yet I did suffer; and that I was pierced, yet I was not lashed; that I was hanged, yet I was not hanged; that blood flowed from me, yet it did not flow; and, in a word, that what they say of me I did not endure, but what they do not say, those things I did suffer. (Acts of John 101)[74]

More stark still are the disaffirmations of the Manichaean Psalms of Heracleides:

> Amen, I was seized; Amen again, I was not seized.
> Amen, I was judged; Amen again, I was not judged.
> Amen, I was crucified; Amen again, I was not crucified.
> Amen, I was pierced; Amen again, I was not pierced.
> Amen, I suffered; Amen again, I did not suffer.… (Ps. Heracl.)[75]

These docetic statements are what one might more naturally expect to find in a Gnostic treatise such as Melchizedek. But instead, the tractate's material similarities are much closer to the paradoxical affirmations of the proto-orthodox Ignatius: "For there is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual, born and unborn, God come in the flesh, true life in death, from both Mary and God, first subject to suffering and then beyond suffering, Jesus Christ our Lord."[76] At the same time, as Pearson points out, whereas the Ignatian statements are presented as paradoxes, those in Melchizedek are polemical contradictions, in which false Christological views are directly countered.

How does one explain such strong anti-docetic polemic in a Gnostic treatise? Pearson considers the possibility that the tractate is connected to the eponymous group of Melchizedekians referred to by several heresiologists. In particular Epiphanius maintained that the Gnostic Melchizedekians subordinated Christ to Melchizedek and affirmed that Christ originated from Mary, that is, that he was born as a man (*Pan*. 55). Interestingly, a low Christology is also attested for the group in both Hippolytus (*Refut*. 7.24) and Pseudo-Tertullian (*Haer*. 8). For them, Christ was purely human, a "mere man," in contrast to the heavenly power of Melchizedek, of which he was the image. The conclusion to hand is that this group stressed the real, fleshly humanity of Christ and his actual suffering in order to contrast these with their more exalted views of Melchizedek.

On the other hand, given the overwhelming unreliabilities of the heresiological reports—Epiphanius being the most obvious and extreme case—there may be a better explanation for the presence of an anti-docetic Christology

in a Gnostic work. Schenke proposes a somewhat more economical solution. The Gnostic tractate of Melchizedek that we now have was at one point edited and revised along proto-orthodox lines, creating the odd amalgam that we now have:

> The simplest solution[:] the assumption that in Melch the degree of secondary Christianization of Sethian gnosis has reached such force that it exceeded its categorical boundaries and that the Sethianism here lost its gnostic character. That is to say: Melch would represent a Christianized Sethianism that is no longer gnostic at all.[77]

However one evaluates the genesis of this odd tradition, it is clear that here in Melchizedek we have one Nag Hammadi document that simultaneously evinces clear Gnostic tendencies and celebrates the importance of the real fleshly character of Christ and his real tangible suffering.

The Epistula Apostolorum

The Epistula Apostolorum presents us with another emphatic declaration of the importance of the flesh of Christ and the future fleshly resurrection of his followers, in the face of false teachers who proclaim a docetic gospel. The document was unknown until Carl Schmidt discovered a Coptic fragment at the Institut de la mission archéologique française in Cairo in 1895.[78] The complete Ethiopic text, extant in five manuscripts, was published by Louis Guerrier and Sylvain Grébaut in 1912.[79] It is generally thought that the Coptic presents the better form of the text, which was originally composed in Greek, even though it is more fragmentary than the Ethiopic.

A range of dates has been plausibly argued for the work, from around 120 CE to the late second century. In addition to the general tone and theological character of the text, a good deal hinges on how one evaluates the striking claim of chapter 17, presented in variant forms in the Coptic and Ethiopic, concerning the time of the second coming of Christ. According to the Coptic this will occur when the “hundredth part and the twentieth part is completed”—that is, 120 years after Christ. According to the Ethiopic it will be “when the hundred and fiftieth year is completed.” The obvious interpretive issues involve the thirty-year difference between the two accounts and the question of when one is to begin the timetable: at Jesus’ birth, for example, or at his death? The temporal discrepancy is most easily explained by the passage of time, with the Ethiopic

translation having been created some years after the 120th year had already been completed. As to when the counting should begin, it seems unlikely that the highly anticipated end of all things would be dated from Jesus' birth, as that was not celebrated in the second century, but from his death and resurrection, which was commemorated not only every year at Easter but every single week of the year. If, as seems most plausible, the Coptic preserves the earlier form of the text, then it was in all likelihood produced sometime before 150 CE or so, possibly close to that time.[80]

Manfred Hornschuh provided the pivotal study of the text in 1965.[81] Notwithstanding his many stunning insights, some of Hornschuh's overarching claims appear today rather quaint, if not quite bizarre, especially his contention that the Epistula "cannot be understood either as a document of ancient Christian origins nor as the gnosis of early Catholicism." For Hornschuh, the document is not "early Christian" because it has a divergent understanding of the person and work of Christ (in his view, the Christology is ultimately docetic, even though the polemic is anti-docetic)[82]; it is not "early Catholic" because it assigns no significance to the church and church offices. The book instead reflects a situation in which the author belongs to a minority anti-Gnostic group that has been forced out of the larger (Gnostic) community.

Hornschuh is certainly right in his stress that the book is anti-Gnostic. But there is no reason to see the book as a secessionist document or to deny its essentially proto-orthodox orientation. Apart from the now obsolete construction of "Frühkatholizismus," Hornschuh's view does not consider the wide range of possibilities open to a proto-orthodox author. Not everyone had to obsess over church hierarchy and offices. Moreover, the book goes out of its way to stress important aspects of the emerging regula fidei, as we will see.

The book is presented as a revelatory letter that "Jesus Christ revealed to his disciples" (ch. 1).[83] It does not assume the form of an epistle, however, but of a postresurrection dialogue, known now so well from precisely the kinds of Gnostic texts to which the book sets itself in opposition. Its pseudepigraphic character, in any event, is clear from the outset. It is a letter describing the experiences of the eleven disciples with the risen Christ after his death and resurrection, written in the first-person plural. The eleven are named and, as has happened before, both Peter and Cephas are said to belong to the apostolic band, as are both Nathaniel and Bartholomew.[84]

The occasion of the letter is the teachings of "the false apostles Simon and Cerinthus." The writer stresses that "in them is deceit with which they kill men." The alternative views of the forger are stated at the outset, as he assures his

readers in the names of the true apostles that “we have heard and felt him after he has risen from the dead” and that he “has revealed to us things great, astonishing, real” (ch. 2). The author then launches into a proto-orthodox regula: “Christ is God and Son of God, who was sent from God, the ruler of the entire world, the maker and creator of what is named with every name. …” The bulk of the book provides an account of Jesus’ teaching to the eleven after appearing to them in his resurrected body, prior to departing from them in the final chapter. That the teaching is needed because of dangerous heresy is reiterated in Jesus’ final words to his disciples: “There will come another teaching and a conflict; and in that they seek their own glory and produce worthless teaching an offence of death will come thereby, and they will teach and turn away from my commandment even those who believe in me and bring them out of eternal life.” Both the teachers and those who heed them “will be eternally punished.”

That the form of this revelation is closely related to what can be found in Gnostic “secret revelation” resurrection dialogues was recognized early on, by Schmidt himself.[85] Schmidt, however, maintained that the book was not meant to attack Gnostics, but to confirm the “catholics” in their faith.[86] Hornschuh, on the other hand, rightly saw that this is a false dichotomy. The Epistula Apostolorum confirms “catholic” views precisely by contradicting the views of their opponents: “One can scarcely deny that the important parts of the letter are to be understood in no other way than as a refutation of the Gnostics.”[87]

Hornschuh notes comparable motifs in such Gnostic works as the Gospel of Mary, the Apocryphon of John, the Sophia of Jesus Christ, and the Pistis Sophia. More could easily be named.[88] The conclusion is near to hand: the author took up the weapon of his enemies in order to fight against them.[89] One major difference, as Hornschuh notes, is that whereas for Gnostics the revelations made by the resurrected Jesus entailed esoteric knowledge for insiders, for the author of the Epistula Apostolorum they are for broad publication. Here they are given in a letter for universal distribution: “As we have heard it, kept it, and have written it for the whole world” (ch. 1).

Of yet greater moment is the substance of the teaching. And in this book, it is all about substance: the flesh of Christ, the fleshly nature of his resurrection, and the fleshly character of the believers’ resurrection yet to come. Even though the incarnation is described in a Gnostic-like account (though see Melchizedek and the Ascension of Isaiah) of the descent of Christ through “the heavens” (ch. 13), in which he passed by “the angels and archangels in their form and as one of them,” becoming “like an angel to the angels,” when he went “into Mary” he “became flesh” (ch. 14). And this was not an appearance. He was flesh and he

remained flesh, as emphasized throughout the account. After his resurrection his disciples "thought it was a ghost" but he demonstrated to them that "I am he who spoke to you concerning my flesh, my death, and my resurrection" (ch. 11). At his insistence the disciples feel him and his wounds; and he tells Andrew "look at my feet and see if they do not touch the ground (Ethiopic: leave a footprint). For it is written in the prophet, 'The foot of a ghost or demon does not join to the ground' (Eth.: "leaves no print on the ground").

This passage provides a stark contrast to the docetic Acts of John, and its famous passage in which the apostle realizes that Jesus did not have a real body and notices to his amazement that the resurrected Jesus leaves no footprint:

> I will tell you another glory, brethren; sometimes when I meant to touch him I encountered a material, solid body; but at other times again when I felt him, his substance was immaterial and incorporeal, and as if it did not exist at all. … And I often wished, as I walked with him, to see if his footprint appeared on the ground—for I saw him raising himself from the earth—and I never saw it. (Acts of John, 93)

Not so with the *Epistula Apostolorum*. After Jesus' resurrection, "we felt him, that he had truly risen in the flesh" (ch. 12). As Jesus later stresses, "I have put on your flesh, in which I was born and died and was buried and rose again" (ch. 19). Moreover, just as Christ rose "in the flesh" so too "you also will arise" (ch. 21). For indeed: "The flesh of every one will rise with his soul alive, and his spirit" (ch. 24; repeated in chs. 25 and 26). Moreover, those who teach "another teaching" will experience real punishment involving physical pain in the afterlife (ch. 29); those who suffer physical persecution in this world, on the other hand, will receive a heavenly reward (ch. 38).

Clearly in the Epistula Apostolorum we are dealing with a counterforgery on numerous levels. In the weak sense, it is a book that counters widespread and popular views that claimed that Christ did not really and permanently come in the flesh. More specifically, it is countering such notions as found in the book's generic parallels in the Gnostic revelation dialogues. This would include such a writing as the Nag Hammadi letter of Peter to Philip, which also records a (non-pseudepigraphic)[90] postresurrection revelation of Christ. Here, though, Christ is not a fleshly being after his resurrection; he comes to the disciples as a light and a voice. Moreover, even though he appeared to experience his Passion, it was all an appearance: "My brothers, Jesus is a stranger to this suffering" (138.21–22).

But in the strongest sense, the Epistula Apostolorum is countering views

found precisely in other forgeries. Numerous striking parallels can be found, for example, with the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, discussed earlier, which contained "secret words" as opposed to those here that are to be published throughout the whole world (138:1); which insisted that salvation comes only when spirits remove themselves from the world of flesh (139.28–30); which taught that the "vessel of the flesh will dissolve and … [be] brought to naught" (141.5–8); which pronounces a woe on "you who hope in the flesh and in the prison that will perish" (143.10–11); and which ends with the exhortation "Watch and pray that you not come to be in the flesh, but rather that you come forth from the bondage of the bitterness of this life" (145.8–10).

Not so for the Epistula Apostolorum, a proto-orthodox forgery that stresses in the names of the apostles that Christ took on real flesh, remained in the flesh, rose in the flesh, and informed his followers that they too would rise, in the flesh.

The Letter to the Laodiceans

The Letter of "Paul" to the Laodiceans survives in a large number of manuscripts of the Latin Bible from the sixth to the fifteenth centuries.[91] The letter is a pastiche of Pauline phrases with no obvious theme or purpose. Apart from the opening line, drawn from Gal. 1:1, the borrowings are almost entirely from Philippians. About a tenth of the letter represents "filler" provided by the author, which is also without character or color.[92]

Scholars have long vied with one another to see who could express the greatest contempt for the letter's sheer banality. Thus Leon Vouaux in 1913: "It is indeed as trivial as possible;[93] Karl Pink in 1925: "The letter is a pitiful concoction without any kind of personal note on behalf of the author, without a trace of heresy, without bias or purpose";[94] Adolf Harnack in 1931: "It is with regard to content and form the most worthless document that has come down to us from Christian antiquity";[95] and most recently Régis Burnet, who moves the lament to the title of an article: "Pourquoi avoir écrit l'insipide épître aux Laodicéens?"[96] The letter nonetheless serves an interesting historical function, as I will argue below: it appears to be a forgery meant to provide an indirect counter to those who would deny the value of the flesh.

The early references to the letter are confused and confusing. The Muratorian Fragment speaks of Marcionite forgeries of "Pauline" letters to the Alexandrians and the Laodiceans. The former no longer survives in any form; with respect to the latter, it is impossible to determine if the unknown author of the canon has

our extant letter in view. If so, it is difficult to know why he would have considered it Marcionite, had he actually managed to read it.[97] Tertullian, soon thereafter, also indicates that the Marcionites had a letter to the Laodiceans, but claims that this was none other than an edited and renamed version of Ephesians (i.e., not a separate production; *Adv. Marc*. 5. 11, 17). Epiphanius complicates matters when he argues that Laodiceans was a separate, fifteenth Pauline letter; but when he quotes from it, he cites Eph. 4:5 (*Panarion*, 42.9.12).

With just these earliest references to a Laodicean letter, then, we are left with a host of puzzles. In the early centuries was there just one letter to the Laodiceans (the one we now have) which was sometimes mistakenly identified as an edition of Ephesians by people who had not actually seen it? Or were there two (e.g., ours and one forged by Marcionites)? Or three (ours, the Marcionites', and an edited form of Ephesians)? And just with respect to our earliest reference: Did the author of the Muratorian Fragment have our letter in mind but not realize that it was not, in fact, Marcionite? Did he have another letter in mind, and not know about our letter? Or did he have our letter and think (as later Harnack would argue) that it was a Marcionite production?

After Epiphanius, references to the letter proliferate.[98] It is only with the Pseudo-Augustinian *Speculum* of the fifth-sixth centuries, however, that we have an actual quotation of our Laodiceans. Moreover, the author of this falsely attributed work sees the letter as canonical. This is also about the time of our earliest manuscript evidence for its existence, in the codex Fuldensis, produced by Victor of Capua in 546 CE. The letter is now found in the better manuscripts of the Vulgate[99]; it came to be widely respected in the West despite the condemnation of Jerome (*Vir. ill*. 5) and others. It was reproduced in German Bibles prior to Luther, for example, and in Czech Bibles until the seventeenth century, where it was placed between Colossians and 1 Thessalonians.[100] But it was rejected unanimously in the Greek-speaking East, most notably at the Second Council of Nicea in 787 CE.[101]

There have been long debates over the original language of the letter, with Westcott arguing that it was written in Latin and his colleague J. B. Lightfoot, who provided the first full collations, arguing for Greek.[102] Harnack opted for a totalizing view, suggesting that it was originally produced in both a Latin form (known to the Muratorian Fragment) and in Greek. That, however, is more a council of despair than a conclusion, and in any event, even with a bilingual edition, one of the two would necessarily have to have been written first.[103] As to when the letter was produced, in theory it could have been any time before our first hard evidence for its existence—the *Speculum*—though most scholars date

it much earlier, to the end of the second century, a date that makes good sense in view of its possible occasion and purpose, as will be seen.

This matter of occasion and purpose has long vexed scholars. The most common explanation is also the most obvious one, that the letter was produced by someone intent on filling the lacuna occasioned by the reference in Col. 4:16: “When this letter is read by you, see also that it is read in Laodicea and that you as well read the one from Laodicea.”[104] If Paul mentions a letter sent to the Laodiceans, there must once have been one, and some unknown forger set out to create it. Burnet objects that the letter could not have been generated on these grounds, since Colossians speaks of a letter ἐκ Λαοδικαίας rather than a letter πρὸς Λαοδικαίαν. And it is true that as early as Chrysostom it was sometimes thought that the reference in Col. 4:16 was not to a letter Paul had written but a letter Paul had received.[105] But there is no reason to push the language so hard. The Colossians passage is frequently read even today as referring to a letter sent by Paul to the Laodiceans, which the Colossian church would get, therefore “from” them, and there is no reason that a forger might not have construed the passage in this way as well. It scarcely need be stressed that since Colossians itself is forged, there is no way of knowing whether the reference to a Laodicean letter indicates real knowledge of some such writing or represents, instead, a simple verisimilitude of the earlier forger.

Even without pressing the logic of the preposition used in Col. 4:16, one might still question if its reference to a now-lost letter can explain the banal concatenation of Pauline phrases that have come down to us as the letter to the Laodiceans. Why would anyone feel compelled to produce such a letter, simply because one was once “known” to exist? Surely something drove the forgery outside of idle curiosity or the desire to supply what was lost. Was it, really, just a random writing exercise? Why then would it have been put into such wide circulation? And how might the author’s motivation relate to the character of the letter he produced, which, had he signed his real name to it, would have opened him up to the charge of plagiarism?

The most radical view came in the later writings of Adolf Harnack, who changed his tune toward the end of his career and decided that in fact our surviving letter is the Marcionite forgery denounced by the Muratorian Fragment.[106] The letter, in Harnack’s judgment, was forged not by Marcion, but by one of his followers. The forger kept his work, with its Marcionite tendencies, very subtle so as to escape detection and enable broad distribution. And his ploy obviously worked. No one except the anonymous author of the Muratorian Fragment recognized the writing for what it was. Until Harnack.

Harnack argues that, despite all previous scholarship, the Marcionite character of the writing can be shown irrefutably (unwiderleglich). His most important points are the following:

Marcion's "Apostolos" began with the letter to the Galatians, which provided the foundation for all that follows, starting with Gal. 1:1. And that is the verse with which the letter to the Laodiceans begins.

Philippians begins with the words "I give thanks to my God." Laodiceans echoes the thanksgiving with a key change that reveals the author's modalistic (i.e., Marcionite) Christology: "I give thanks to Christ" (v. 3).

On two occasions in vv. 4–5 the author warns against the vapid preaching of false teachers, which stands over against the "veritas evangelii." This phrase, "the truth of the Gospel" is a Marcionite terminus technicus. Moreover, by stressing that this true gospel is "preached by me," the author sets his (Paul's) proclamation over that of other evangelists or apostles—a key Marcionite emphasis.

Marcion denied the promise of knowledge of "eternal life" to those who adhered to the Old Testament and, especially, to the catholic Christians. "Eternal life" became a catchword of his proclamation and for his church. And strikingly the phrase "eternal life" shows up twice, unexpectedly, in this letter in vv. 5 and 10 (cf. v. 7).

Harnack concludes: "These observations are decisive: our letter is a Marcionite forgery."[107] As indicated, however, for him the letter did not derive from Marcion himself. For one thing, Marcion renamed Ephesians Laodiceans, and so had no reason to create a separate letter to the Laodiceans. What is more, the letter was not produced as Marcion produced his other "biblical" writings, which was through editing, not creating/compiling. And so one of Marcion's followers produced it after his lifetime but before the Muratorian Canon, 160–190 CE. This unknown author wanted to fill the gap left by Col. 4:16 and did so by bringing the clandestine Marcionite teachings (die heimlich Marcionitischen Lehren) to expression in a way that catholic Christians would not be able to detect. And so he worked with Pauline phrases, principally from Philippians, because it was relatively easy, using this epistle, to make the composition appear harmless. Fearing to show his hand, he did not include any explicitly Marcionite teachings in the letter.

If anyone could make a case for the banal letter of the Laodiceans being a

Marcionite forgery, it would have been the mighty Harnack. But he won virtually no converts to his view. Each of his points individually appears weak: (1) if the author wanted to stress Galatians at the outset, why would he not quote it more extensively throughout, and use at least one phrase that actually mattered for the Marcionite cause? (2) the exchange of God and Christ was exceedingly common in early scribal and homiletical contexts, and never required a Marcionite modalism for explanatory force; (3) false teachers are a problem for every Christian group, not just the Marcionites; (4) so too eternal life was a ubiquitous concern. More than that, there simply is no Marcionite theology in the letter. To claim that the author worked subtly would be an understatement: even heresiologists known for their ability to sniff out heresy where none existed did not detect a whiff of Marcionism in the letter. The letter would certainly not have been accepted in the West had there been the least thing to suspect in it; moreover, there would be no reason for the author of the Muratorian Canon to oppose the Marcionite "Laodiceans" if in fact this pastiche of Pauline phrases were it. There must, then, be a different explanation.

The most recent attempt at solving the problem is by R. Burnet, who tries to use the set of commonplaces that constitute the letter to advantage, in arguing that the letter has no point except to exist precisely as a letter of Paul.[108] Unlike Paul himself, who used his letters as a substitute for his oral message when personally present, this letter has no message: it simply is "Paul" making himself present. Moreover, since the letter talks of eternal life—and thus eternity—this letter is not from the historical Paul but from the Paul living in eternity. It is Paul writing from heaven. The purpose of the letter is not to convey a message but to convey an apostolic presence from the world beyond.

Burnet's hypothesis, which, he admits with a bit of understatement, is "sans avoir de preuve" (p. 140), is that the Christians in Laodicea were jealous of the fact that Paul had written a letter to the Colossians, and so created a letter of their own, so that they too could claim to have an apostolic presence in their midst. The letter was important for them for its status as an object; not for the message it conveys (since it conveys none).

Unlike Harnack, Burnet does not attempt to offer any argument for his hypothesis, which must, as a result, remain as unprovable as any baseless hypothesis. It should be noted, however, that there is no evidence that the letter was actually produced in, read in, cherished in, or preserved in Laodicea. Nothing connects it with Laodicea other than its address. Any real association with the Christians there—about whom we know next to nothing—is necessarily imaginary.

A more compelling option was suggested by Wolfgang Speyer, although he did not explicate it in any detail. This is a view that turns Harnack's suggestion precisely on its head: our letter to the Laodiceans is not the Marcionite forgery mentioned by the Muratorian Fragment, but a proto-orthodox counterforgery, produced precisely to oppose the (now-lost, if it ever existed) Marcionite version.[109]

If hard-pressed one could dig as deep into the well as did Harnack to find characteristics of the letter that could be taken in anti-Marcionite ways. The author, claiming to be Paul, tells his reasons to avoid false teaching that leads "away from the truth of the gospel" (v. 4). And why? Because of what will happen on the "day of judgment" (v. 3). That day will be survived by those who do the appropriate "good works" (v. 5). The author stresses his own suffering, which will lead to salvation (vv. 6–7). The author is happy to die for the sake of the gospel (v. 8). These are all tactile phenomena. The author stresses the importance of the physical response to the gospel: to do good, to act for God, to suffer, to die—all for God. Salvation does not come from an empty belief in a docetic Christ, but a hard-fought life of love and service.

But not too much can be made of the tactility expressed in the letter. The reason for thinking it is an anti-Marcionite forgery is that it exists. This is comparable to the supposition of Burnet, but in this case there is both an argument and a logic. What we know historically is this. In proto-orthodox circles, as evidenced in the Muratorian Fragment and Epiphanius, for example, it was known—or at least believed—that a Marcionite forgery existed, a letter of Paul to the Laodiceans. This forgery, whether real or imagined, was almost certainly conceived of on the basis of Col. 4:16, and was with equal certainty a forgery that actually (or imaginarily) pressed a Marcionite agenda (which, among other things, opposed the material world, Christ's flesh, and the importance of human flesh). Proto-orthodox writers not only knew of the existence of this forgery; they also, naturally, opposed it. But what would be the best way to show that the Marcionite forgery was not the letter Paul was referring to in Col. 4:16? What better way than to produce the *real* letter of Paul to the Laodiceans? If the real item existed, the Marcionite version would be exposed as a forgery.

And so a proto-orthodox author produced the "real" thing. That is why the letter is both completely banal and totally dependent on other Pauline letters. There was no point to the forgery other than its existence, to show that the Marcionite forgery was a fraud. But it had to sound very much like Paul to be convincing. And who sounds more like Paul than Paul? The forger then simply

borrowed a large number of phrases from Galatians and, especially, Philippians, strung them together, gave them a Pauline epistolary frame and format, and thereby accomplished his aim. The letter he produced was “the” Letter to the Laodiceans. To counter the Marcionite forgery it did not have to replicate anti-Marcionite polemic. All it had to do was sound like Paul. The author succeeded spectacularly. The letter circulated as part of the New Testament throughout a large chunk of the Latin Middle Ages.

The Apocalypse of Peter

The Apocalypse of Peter, to be differentiated from the Coptic Apocalypse of the same name, was discovered during the winter excavation season of 1886–87 by a French archeological team, digging in Cemetery A at al-Hawawis in the desert necropolis of Akhmim. It is one of four texts included in the sixty-six page book that included, as well, the Gospel of Peter.[110] Debates over the date of the manuscript have been most satisfactorily resolved by Cavallo and Maehler, who place the hand in the late sixth century.[111] Since the discovery, two small Greek fragments have appeared, shown by M. R. James to derive from a single manuscript. One of these is now in the Bodlean; the other is in the Erzherzog Rainer collection in Vienna.[112]

The Ethiopic version of the apocalypse was uncovered from the manuscript tradition of the Pseudo-Clementines, and published in 1907 and 1910 by E. Grébaut, though not recognized as belonging to the same account as the Greek text until 1911, again by M. R. James.[113] Today it is generally recognized that the Ethiopic version, which was probably derived from Arabic, is the older of the two, and that the surviving Greek text has been seriously edited, possibly in order to make it more closely aligned with the Gospel of Peter in the same codex.[114] The differences between the two versions matter a good deal for interpretation. As van Minnen points out, the Akhmim fragment edits away all positive “references to things Jewish.”[115] Of yet greater significance for our purposes in this chapter, the future punishments of the damned in the Ethiopic account are transformed in the Greek into punishments in the present for those dwelling in heaven and hell.

Date

There have been numerous debates over the date of the writing. As it is cited by Clement of Alexandria (Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.14.1; *Ecl. Proph*. 41.2, 48–49) and

named by the Muratorian Fragment, it can clearly date no later than the mid second century.[116] Some scholars have urged greater precision in the dating, notably D. Buchholz and especially R. Bauckham, who base their arguments on the interpretation of the parable of the fig tree in chapter 2.[117] Here Peter asks for an explanation of the parable, and Christ launches into a detailed exposition. The fig tree "is the house of Israel."[118] Once its branches sprout, then "shall deceiving Christs come, and awaken hope (with the words): 'I am the Christ.'" One in particular will arise who "is not the Christ." And when the followers of Jesus reject this one, "he will kill with the sword (dagger) and there shall be many martyrs." These "shall be reckoned among the good and righteous martyrs who have pleased God in their life."

Bauckham argues that this passage refers to the false messiah Bar Kochba and to his slaying of Christians who refused to participate in the second revolt, as mentioned by Justin (see 1 *Apol*. 31). The Apocalypse, then, can be dated to the time of the second revolt, 132–35 CE. Other scholars, however, such as van Minnen, have made convincing counterarguments. Even if ch. 2 refers to the events under Bar Kochba—which is not clear, as the references are far from precise—that would simply mean that the text would date to some period later than 135; Bar Kochba, in that case, may be used by the text as an example of the *kind* of antichrist that will arise.[119] E. Tigchelaar goes even farther: the text at issue is corrupt, most of the terms used of the messianic figure are stock, there is no evidence that Bar Kochba killed "many" Christians, and many of the historical references of the text work as well for the events of 115–17 CE. One payoff is that we cannot use the second revolt as the hermeneutical lens for reading the account.[120] At most we can say that the document was produced at least by the middle of the second century.

Whenever it was produced, the Apocalypse of Peter proved to be a historically significant book. It was considered to be part of Scripture by Clement of Alexandria[121] and the scribe of codex Claramontanus. It is listed as a disputed book in the Muratorian Fragment and the Stichometry of Nicephorus. Eusebius saw it as spurious (*H.E*. 3.3.2, 3.25.4, 6.14.1), but Sozomen reported that it was used in public worship on Good Friday (*H.E*. 7.19). It is not, however found in the Gelasian Decree.

Narrative

The Apocalypse of Peter is noteworthy as the first surviving account of a guided tour of the realms of the damned (chs. 3–12, Ethiopic) and the blessed (chs.

13–16; the Greek reverses the sequence). The beginning of the narrative sounds very much like the opening of the famous apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13 and its Synoptic parallels: “And when he was seated on the Mount of Olives, his own came unto him, and we entreated and implored him severally and besought him saying unto him, ‘Make known unto us what are the signs of thy parousia and of the end of the world.’”

The bulk of the narrative, then, recounts in graphic detail and some voyeuristic glee the fates awaiting souls in the age to come. The account concludes with an alternative version of the transfiguration, in which Peter volunteers to build “three tabernacles,” one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah; a voice comes from heaven affirming that Christ is the beloved Son, and then a great cloud comes to take away all three of them.

Bauckham in particular has argued that the narrative is not to be seen as a variation on the apocalyptic discourse of the Synoptics but as a postresurrection narrative.[122] If he were right, the work would present the final words of the resurrected Jesus to his followers and could be seen as a kind of counterforgery to the Gnostic revelation dialogues. In this it would be much like the Epistula Apostolorum, as here—contrary to the Gnostic counterparts—the real physical experiences of the afterlife are quite emphatically in the flesh. But the account, as we will see, is anti-Gnostic wherever one places it in the story of Jesus, and it is very hard indeed to deny that the opening sets the stage for an alternative description of the small apocalypse of Mark 13 and its parallels. Moreover, the conclusion is not an ascension narrative, as Bauckham is forced to argue, but contains all the elements of the transfiguration scene (Peter’s presence; Moses and Elijah; the voice from heaven; the cloud).

In any event, the “tour” (real or imagined) that Christ gives Peter of the respective realms of the dead focuses on the tactile experiences of the afterlife. Most attention has been paid to the horrific punishments meted out to sinners. Five times in the account the author stresses that each one will be treated “according to his deeds” performed while living. Nowhere is the point more emphatic than at the outset, where Christ proclaims:

> Recompense shall be given to each according to his work. As for the elect who have done good, they will come to me and will not see death by devouring fire. But the evil creatures, the sinners and the hypocrites will stand in the depths of the darkness that passes not away, and their punishment is the fire, and angels bring forward their sins and prepare for them a place wherein they shall be punished for ever, each according

to his offence. (ch. 6)

What has struck scholars most is that many of the punishments of hell work on the principle of the lex talionis. This is not simply a Jewish notion, as István Czachesz points out by recalling the clever line in Aelius Theon's *Progymnasmata*: "Didymon the flute player, on being convicted of adultery, was hanged by his namesake."[123] But as also widely noted, not all of the punishments described in the book are "kind for kind." In the helpful taxonomy of Bauckham, four of the twenty-one torments are specifically body part for body part; and six others could be construed this way. Others, however, replicate common human punishments made eternal (whips, burnings); others reflect what happens typically to exposed human corpses (being eaten by birds); and yet others have traditional associations with the Jewish place of punishment, Gehenna (darkness, fire).[124] In any event, the punishments are individualized for different kinds of sin; they are as a whole meant to vindicate God's justice; they are retributive, not reformatory (too late for all that!); and they are eternal—a fact stressed eleven times in the older form of the Ethiopic, though edited out in the Greek, possibly because the editor had an alternative understanding of eschatological realities. This final point is worth stressing. In the Ethiopic version the punishments describe what will be; in the Greek they are what is occurring in the present. One cannot help but suspect that the de-apocalypticized version represents a transformation generated by the failure of the end to materialize, or at least the heightened sense that it probably never would materialize in the way formerly anticipated.

The Polemical Nature of the Text

Even though the Apocalypse of Peter engages in rather obvious attacks on certain immoral activities and the people who engage in them, it does not level its assault on any groups of heretics or false teachers (in contrast, as we will see, to the Apocalypse of Paul)—or of nonbelievers (e.g., Jews, apart from the possible reference to Bar Kochba). The explicit polemic involves sins, primarily of the flesh. Still, that in itself may be significant in view of the theological debates of the early and middle second century. It is striking and well worth noting that what is emphasized here, in the name of Peter, is the physical fate of humans, in the flesh. They experience either brutal torment or eternal ecstasy. The book in other words, may well function polemically in emphasizing precisely a doctrine that, at the time of its composition, was in wide dispute

among various Christian groups, not in the manner of, say, 3 Corinthians, which addresses the issue of the flesh head on as a polemical issue, but by emphasizing the importance of flesh through the words of Christ himself, delivered to his disciples, especially Peter. A number of discussions of the book miss this forest for the trees, not realizing that the flesh is one of the book's ultimate concerns.

The stress on the flesh is clear in the opening eschatological discourse, where Christ emphasizes that on the "day of God" there will be "the decision of the judgment of God" when all people will be gathered before the Father, who will command hell to open up and give up everyone in it. Then, most notably "the beasts and the fowls shall he command to give back all flesh that they have devoured, since he desires that men should appear (again); for nothing perishes for God" (ch. 4). This, then, is "the resurrection of the dead on the day of judgment"—a raising of all flesh to face judgment in the flesh.

The fleshly character of suffering is particularly evident in what Czachesz has called the "grotesque body," the all-too physical "combination of the ludicrous and fearful" in the detailed torments of the damned.[125] So too with the godly ecstasies narrated in chapter 16, experienced in a beautiful garden with sweet fragrances, to satisfy the bodily senses. It might also be noted that, at the end, it is precisely "men in the flesh" who come to welcome Christ into heaven (ch. 17).

The Pseudepigraphical Character

The forger establishes his false identity at the outset, first as one of Jesus' disciples ("we entreated and implored him severally," ch. 1) and then more concretely as the head disciple himself ("I, Peter, answered and said unto him," ch. 2). The authorial pretense is maintained throughout the narrative, although to some extent it is more pronounced in the later Greek version, where the visions of the damned are narrated in the first person rather than the third (e.g., "I saw another place …" Greek ch. 21, and so on). At the end as well, we have, in both versions, first-person narrative, spoken by Peter: "I approached God Jesus Christ and said to him …" (ch. 16).

A key question that is rarely asked and even more rarely answered in scholarship on the text involves precisely the pseudepigraphic claim. Why does the author feign to be Peter, in particular? In his discussion of *Petrine Controversies* Terence Smith raises the question and never answers it.[126] Bauckham suggests that it is because Peter is the principal disciple and important in Matthew, the author's favorite Gospel. But that too does not get us very far.

It may be more useful to consider the stress the author places on the physicality of the afterlife, where rewards and punishments will be in the flesh. Peter, as we have seen, was sometimes associated with an alternative eschatology, in which the flesh was belittled. Docetic understandings of Christ, and thus denigrations of the importance of the flesh generally, can be found in the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, the letter of Peter to Philip, and—as read, at least, by Serapion and his associates, whether or not this was the authorial "intention"—in the Gospel of Peter. This author responds by stressing the opposite perspective and authorizing his view by appeal, again, to Peter himself. The flesh matters, and will continue to matter into the afterlife.

It is interesting to consider the connections between the two Apocalypses of Peter in this regard, one of them devaluing the flesh and the other emphasizing it. It may be pushing the matter too far to claim that one of them was written in response to the other. They are, after all, dealing with different subject matters. But if nothing else their similarities and differences do highlight the varying interpretations of the flesh attributed to the chief apostle by forgers antagonistic to one another's views. Both the docetic Coptic Apocalypse of Peter and this proto-orthodox version involve revelations of Christ directly to Peter, that is, visionary experiences that Christ mediates; both take place near the end of Jesus' life; both reveal what cannot be perceived by the normal processes of human observation; both are concerned with spiritual blindness; both see the need to differentiate between truth and error; both have ultimate, eschatological implications to their views of the flesh.

The distinctions between the two accounts are yet more revealing.

In the Coptic apocalypse Peter does not understand what he sees and is told that what is perceived by physical sight is not the ultimate reality. In the proto-orthodox apocalypse Peter understands perfectly well what he sees and his vision represents itself as the ultimate reality.

In the Coptic apocalypse ultimate reality transcends the flesh and resides in the realm of the spirit. In the proto-orthodox version ultimate reality is precisely in the flesh.

In the Coptic apocalypse the ultimate goal of salvation is to be removed from the body and its sensations; the end comes when the physical body is transcended. In the proto-orthodox version salvation comes in the body and its sensations, and the end comes when the physical body is rewarded or tormented.

In the Coptic apocalypse the literal teachings of Peter lead to blindness and

error. In the proto-orthodox Apocalypse it is the literal teachings of Peter about the literal events of the future that constitute ultimate truth.

In the Coptic apocalypse the orthodox Christians are condemned for clinging to the name of a dead man. In the proto-orthodox version Jesus is a crucified man whose example should be followed and whose martyrs are counted as pleasing to God.

In the Coptic apocalypse Jesus tells Peter to be strong; since Jesus will be with him, none of his enemies will prevail against him. In the proto-orthodox apocalypse Jesus sends Peter to his martyrdom: "Leave and go to the city of the west and drink the wine about which I have told you."[127]

And so, even though the two "revelations" are about two different matters—Christ's crucifixion and the fate of the dead—the books are very much at odds with one another at a number of key points. The Coptic version is explicitly countering a set of views that is endorsed by the proto-orthodox version, whose own polemic is much more subtle but recognizable nonetheless. The flesh matters. In Buchholz's summary, the author "was involved in the debate over the believers' resurrection bodies. He insists on a very physical, future resurrection for believers."[128] This view is presented specifically in a forgery in the name of Peter, chief of the disciples, and counters writings—including some forgeries—that take, or were believed to take, precisely the opposite perspective, also in the name of Peter, including not only the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter but also the Gospel of Peter and the Letter of Peter to Philip.

The Apocalypse of Paul

Far more influential on the history of Christian thought than the Apocalypse of Peter, though clearly dependent on it for many of its traditions, was the Apocalypse of Paul, which was originally composed in Greek but came to be translated into a number of languages: Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, and Ethiopic.[129] The work as we have it is dated at the outset: "In the consulate of Theodosius Augustus the Younger and of Cynegius, a certain respected man was living in Tarsus…"[130] Commonly this is taken to indicate that the book was composed, in its final form, around 388 CE.[131] But this in fact is merely the terminus ad quem. And so Silverstein has influentially argued for a later date of around 420 CE and Piovanelli for a slightly earlier one of 395–416 CE.[132] Most recently Hilhorst agrees with an early-fifth-century date for the

existing text, but, along with others, stresses that an earlier iteration of the account, lacking the prologue, appears to be attested at least 150 years earlier, as some form of the account was probably known to Origen. Origen quotes the text in a fragment preserved by the thirteenth-century Syrian author Bar Hebraeus (*Nomocanon* VII, 9); moreover Origen's Homily 5 on Psalm 36 describes the fate of souls that appears to parallel the Apocalypse of Paul 13ff. Hilhorst's conclusion is that "some version of the *Apocalypse of Paul* must have existed in the first half of the early third century."[133]

Despite its widespread popularity—down at least to Dante—the work was roundly condemned in orthodox circles, including in the Gelasian Decree. Augustine had nothing good to say about it:

> And from this circumstance, with a most foolish presumption, certain vain persons have devised an *Apocalypse of Paul*, which the sound Church does not accept, full of some fables or other, asserting that this it is about which he had said that he had been caught up to the third heaven and there had heard "unspeakable words, which it is not granted to man to utter." In any event, their audacity would be intolerable if they had said that he had heard [words] which it is not *yet* granted to man to utter; but since he said "which it is not granted to man to utter," who are those people who dare to utter these [words] impudently and unsuccessfully?[134]

Nor did Sozomen:

> So the work entitled The Apocalypse of the Apostle Paul, though unrecognized by the ancients, is still esteemed by most of the monks. Some persons affirm that the book was found during this reign, by Divine revelation, in a marble box, buried beneath the soil in the house of Paul at Tarsus in Cilicia. I have been informed that this report is false by Cilix, a presbyter of the church in Tarsus, a man of very advanced age, as is indicated by his gray hairs, who says that no such occurrence is known among them, and wonders if the heretics did not invent the story.[135]

Arguably the most famous feature of the book is the opening discovery narrative that Sozomen refers to, and which I have already discussed.[136] The account itself

begins with a lamentation on the sinfulness of humans by the sun, moon, stars, and sea (chs. 3–10). Paul is then taken up to the third heaven where he is shown the fate of souls from on high, in particular that of one righteous and one unrighteous man (chs. 11–16). There follows a tour of the realms of the blessed and the damned, based in part on the visions of the Apocalypse of Peter. Throughout the account it is assumed that the rewards of the blessed are given temporarily until the soul returns to the body for the final judgment day: “And they roused the soul saying: Soul take knowledge of your body which you have left, for in the day of resurrection you must return to that same body to receive what is promised to all the righteous” (ch. 14). One can assume that the torments described in such graphic detail are, likewise, preliminary to those yet to come at the resurrection.[137]

The torments of the damned have a good deal in common with those earlier assigned to Peter’s vision: here too there is a stress on the physicality of both ecstasy and torment, the former, in this case, being described in graphic terms reminiscent of the famous superlatives of Papias.[138] But there are also key differences from the author’s model.[139] Whereas the patriarchs, prophets, and righteous of the Old Testament are praised, there appears a strain of anti-Jewish sentiment in the statement of chapter 48: “See, Moses, what those of your people have done to the Son of God.” Of far greater significance is the heightened attention given to Christians. On one hand, the wilderness ascetics are praised early in the account, whereas those who do not fulfill their ascetic practices are roundly condemned (chs. 9–10; again, e.g., ch. 23). Among the blessed are the married souls who nonetheless remain chaste (ch. 22). On the other hand, those who fast but who are proud and who praise themselves cannot enter the city of Christ (ch. 24). Moreover, church people who are not totally committed to a Christian lifestyle are punished in boiling fire; these include those who spent some of their days in prayer, but others in sin, and who were involved in idle disputes; and those who took the eucharist but then committed fornication (ch. 31).

Yet more striking is the punishment suffered specifically by Christian leaders. There are gory eternal torments lying in wait for a presbyter who is punished severely for not fasting and for offering communion while in a state of fornication (ch. 34); for a bishop who was not just and did not pity widows and orphans (ch. 35); for a deacon who used the oblations for himself and committed fornication (ch. 36); for a reader who did not keep the precepts of God (ch. 36); for those who disparaged the Word of God and did not obey it (ch. 37); for those who stopped fasting too soon (ch. 39); and for would-be monks who did not live

the life of a monk (ch. 40).

But above all there are the heretics, who falsely hold to a docetic Christology and deny the importance of the flesh. It is here that the real polemic can be found. The worst punishment of all—"seven times greater than these" (ch. 40)—is the "well" filled with an unbearable stench, and peopled by "those who have not confessed that Christ came in the flesh and that the Virgin Mary bore him, and who say that the bread of the eucharist and the cup of blessing are not the body and blood of Christ" (ch. 41). Others are tormented by cold and gnashing of teeth and cubit-long worms with two heads: "They are those who say that Christ has not risen from the dead and that this flesh does not rise" (ch. 42).

Here then we have the implicit polemic of the earlier Apocalypse of Peter taken to an extreme and made explicit. Not only does the physicality of the afterlife emphasize the importance of the flesh in the face of those who deny it; the most horrendous torments are reserved precisely for such heretical naysayers. For this orthodox author there can be no crime more heinous or deserving of eternal and excruciating torment than the sin of denying that Christ himself came in the flesh and that the resurrection would be in the flesh. Eternity would indeed be a fleshly existence, as those who refused to acknowledge it would discover to their eternal horror.

1. Quotations taken from James Brashler and Roger Bullard, "Apocalypse of Peter," in *NHL*.

2. On the difference between a docetic and a separationist Christology, see Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, pp. 140–45, 212–19.

3. Cf. Havelaar, *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, p. 190: "the idea of a division between the real Savior who cannot suffer and the material Jesus who is crucified is a common theme in the Nag Hammadi corpus."

4. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, "The Suffering Jesus and the Invulnerable Christ in the Gnostic *Apocalypse of Peter*," in Jan Bremmer, ed., *The Apocalypse of Peter* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), pp. 187–99; Havelaar, *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, p. 179.

5. Havelaar, *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, p. 186.

6. John D. Turner, "The Book of Thomas and the Platonic Jesus," in Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier, eds., *L'évangile selon Thomas et les textes de Nag Hammadi* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval / Louvain: Peeters, 2007), p. 601.

7. Turner suggests that the book may represent a secondary combination of two originally distinct treatises: (1) an older dialogue that had been created by

dissecting an earlier epitome of Plato's teaching on the soul and making it into a series of expositions on this teaching by Jesus in response to questions; and (2) a collection of dominical sayings reminiscent of Q, with woes and blessings. When the two works were combined, the whole was then attributed to Thomas. See Turner, "The Book of Thomas."

8. Quotations are taken from John D. Turner, "The Book of Thomas the Contender," in *NHL*.

9. It is not important to my purposes here to determine where the book fits more broadly within the Thomasine tradition of early Christianity. Turner argues that the book occupies a "median position" between the Gospel of Thomas and the Acts of Thomas, in terms of date, dominance of the figure of Thomas, and development of genre (it lies between a list of sayings and a full narrative). Moreover, in this sequence the notion of sexual renunciation becomes increasingly dominant from one book to the next. Paul-Hubert Poirer, however, does not think the three books can be linked together ("The Writings Ascribed to Thomas and the Thomas Tradition," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 295–307). Schenke goes even farther to argue that the Book of Thomas stands outside the Thomasine tradition (H.-M. Schenke, *Das Thomas Buch [Nag Hammadi-Codexes II, 7]*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1989, 65).

). Turner, "Book of Thomas and the Platonic Jesus," pp. 606–7. Turner's article enumerates numerous parallels with the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*.

. Translations taken from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 303–35.

!. Contra DeConick, *The Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 135.

}. Johannes Leipoldt, *Das Evangelium nach Thomas* TU 101 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1967), p. 62.

!. *The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 96.

;. *The Gospel of Thomas*, p. 104.

;. See pp. 234–35.

'. *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 192.

}. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 140.

). Translation of Wesley Isenberg, *NHL*.

). Moreover, Valantasis assumes that the "body" refers to the body of believers. But in fact the saying denigrates the body, rather than affirming it. DeConick proposes the same textual emendation for saying 80 as for saying 56.

. *Gospel of Thomas*, p. 110.

2. DeConick, *Original Gospel of Thomas*, p. 254; italics hers.

3. See also R. Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), pp. 58–62, who discusses the Platonic context for the problem of souls being united with bodies.

4. There are, of course, a large number of theories about the relationship of the letter to the Fourth Gospel, with nearly every possible view represented by reasonable scholars, including a range of views of the relationship of the two prologues. On all this, one can simply consult the commentaries. Since the epistle does not deal with problems involving the Jewish synagogue, but is instead concerned with a secessionist movement that almost certainly occurred later in the community's history, the simplest and now probably most widespread solution to the relationship of the books is that they derive from two authors living at different times and addressing situations out of a very similar tradition rooted in the same community. With respect to the similar prologues, the author of 1 John appears to try to imitate that of his more famous predecessor, and is not altogether successful in the attempt.

5. See *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979) and his valuable commentary *The Epistles of John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982).

6. This is not the view of Brown himself, who thinks the secessionists simply undervalue the salvific importance of Jesus' humanity. This view, however, cannot explain all the polemical emphases of the letter, including the prologue. See my assessment in *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, pp. 153–57, esp. n. 66.

7. See ibid., p. 200, n. 63.

8. See ibid., pp. 153–55, and its discussion of 1 John 5:6.

9. I have borrowed much of the following two paragraphs from my discussion in ibid., pp. 155–56.

0. Among the sundry options, the one proposed by Strecker has considerable merit, that the neuter relative used four times in 1—despite the fact that it is neuter (which, of course, is the problem)—in conjunction with the περι clause of 1b, "refers to nothing other than the Christ event to which the author testifies" (Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*. Hermeneia. Trans. Linda Maloney [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996; German original 1989], p. 10). But even more persuasive is Raymond Brown, that the pronoun refers to "that entity that became human" (so that the pre-existent Logos in some sense is depersonalized). *Epistles of John*, pp. 151–54.

1. P. 163. Brown goes on to claim that the author is not *really* indicating that he had real contact with Jesus, since he was writing much later and could not have been an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry. R. Schnackenburg too refuses to believe

that the author could really be claiming to be an eyewitness, since he was not one (*The Johannine Epistles*, New York: Crossroads, 1992, ET of 7th German edition of 1984, original 1953, p. 55). Both of these exegetical opinions overlook the pseudepigraphic character of the author's claims. This oversight creates a contradiction in the interpretation. On one hand, Schneemelcher indicates that in the prologue the author is "expressing a prophetic self-consciousness in which he appropriates to himself the experience of a witness who actually saw and heard," but he then indicates that "1 John does not otherwise betray a 'prophetic self-consciousness'" (p. 55).

2. Without compelling reason, Judith Lieu asserts the contrary: that "the assertion that 'we have heard … we have seen' is not a claim to an eyewitness experience of the historical ministry of Jesus made by a group of the original disciples." Her logic is the same as Brown's and Schnackenburg's (see the preceding note): that since this author was not an eyewitness, he could not be claiming to be one. She too, then, fails to consider the possibility that the author wants to portray himself as an eyewitness, precisely in order to validate his claims about the real fleshly existence of Christ. As a result, she proposes a rather obscure and romantic understanding of the first-person pronoun in the prologue: "its chief effort is to invite its readers to be attuned to the echoes and associations of the unequivocal authority of sensory experience, to attest it, and to determine whether they will affirm it and, by affirming it, whether they will shape their own lives by the pattern of consequences that the rest of the letter will trace." In response I would say that this is precisely not the "chief effort" of the author. He instead wants his readers to know that he is an authority who has actually experienced the incarnate word of life as a physical, tangible entity, so that they can rest assured that Christ really did come in the flesh. See Judith Lieu, *I, II, and III John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), pp. 35–43, quotation pp. 40–41.

3. See note 24.

4. See the discussion in Brown, *Epistles of John*, pp. 9–10.

5. *I, II, and III John*, p. 3.

6. A. Plummer, *The Epistles of S. John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1886), p. 14.

7. See notes 31 and 32 above; John Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*. SP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), pp. 129–30.

8. Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, p. 14. It should be noted that the author's claim is quite different from that of the author of the Fourth Gospel, who does indeed say "we beheld his glory" (1:14), but does not claim to be an actual eyewitness. On

the contrary, he appears to be claiming to speak of the glory revealed to all believers; he is one who has believed “without seeing” (20:29). Evidence for this interpretation comes at the end of the Gospel, where the author clearly indicates that he was not one of the disciples (20:30–31), and at the scene of the crucifixion where the author indicates that he himself is not the one who observed the event but that he derived his information from one who had (19:35).

). Indeed, Strecker can maintain that a different author produced 1 John, on the basis of the facts that he does not call himself a πρεσβεύτερος, that the letter is of a different form (critically), and that there are different views of theology and church discipline (“what one finds here is an independent author in the Johannine school tradition”; *Johannine Letters*, p. xl). I do not find this view persuasive, in part because I think 2 John 7 is difficult to explain if not from the same author as 1 John 4:2–3. But it is not at all implausible that the author sent a general letter into broader circulation, claiming to be an eyewitness to what he attests, rather than simply to a single house church.

). Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.25.10.

.. A case could be made that the anonymous author of 1 John wanted to be known not only as a disciple who was in Jesus’ physical presence, but also as the author of the Fourth Gospel; hence his attempt to imitate the Prologue of his predecessor.

!. *In Polycarpionam epistolarum Ignationarum syllogen annotationes* (Oxford), p. 29. For a full sketch of the manuscript tradition, see Vahan Hovhanessian, *Third Corinthians: Reclaiming Paul for Christian Orthodoxy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 3–10.

}. *Histoire critique de la république des lettres* Tome X (Amsterdam/Utrecht, 1714), pp. 148–71.

l. J. Zohrab, *Astuatsashunch’ Matean Hin Ew Nor Ktakarants’* (= Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; Venice: Srboyn Ghazaru, 1805; reprinted Delmar: Caravan Books, 1984), pp. 25–27.

;. In part II of *Collection of Authentic Records Belonging to the Old and New Testament* (London: William Whiston, 1727).

;. See Rowland E. Prothero, *The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals*, IV (New York: Scribner’s, 1900), pp. 429–33.

’. *Das Sendschreiben der Korinther an den Apostel Paulus und das dritte Sendschreiben Pauli an die Korinther* (Heidelberg: C. F. Winter, 1823). For further information on manuscript discoveries, summarized here, see Steve Johnston, “La Correspondance apocryphe entre Paul et les Corinthiens: un

pseudépigraphe paulinien au service de la polémique anti-gnostique de la fin du II siècle" (M.A. thesis, University of Laval, 2004), 1–30; and Hovhanessian, *Third Corinthians*, pp. 3–10.

8. "The Pseudo-Ephremian *Commentary on Third Corinthians:* A Study in Exegesis and Anti-Bardai-sanite Polemic," in *After Bardaisan: Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Han J. W. Drijvers*, ed. Gerrit J. Reinink and Alexander Cornelis Klugkist (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), pp. 51–63.

9. See the discussion in Hovhanessian, *Third Corinthians*, pp. 6–9.

0. *Acta Pauli: Aus der Heidelberger Koptischen Papyrushandschrift Nr. 1* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905), pp. 125–45.

1. *Papyrus Bodmer X–XII* (Geneva: Bibliotheque Bodmer, 1959). See as well his "La Correspondance apocryphe de saint Paul et des Corinthiens," in *Littérature et théologie pauliniennes* (Louvain: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), pp. 217–23.

2. Adolf Harnack, "Die apokryphen Briefe des Paulus an die Laodicener und Korinther," in *Apocrypha IV*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1931), pp. 6–23.

3. "There are reasons to suppose that the correspondence was not written by the same author as the Acts of Paul." A. F. J. Klijn, "The Apocryphal Correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians," *VC* 17 (1963): 13.

4. One might be tempted to postulate, further, that the two letters were composed independently of one another. The second letter, from Paul to the Corinthians, can easily stand on its own, apart from the earlier set of inquiries of the first letter; moreover, in this letter Paul mentions neither the first letter nor the heretics who are its principal concern. In addition, whereas the first letter assumes that Paul has already been delivered from his legal troubles ("the Lord has delivered you from the godless," v. 8), in the second he is in prison (v. 1) and in chains (v. 34). The differences between the letters, however, are as difficult to explain on the hypothesis of the first being written later as an introduction to the second as on the standard view that both were written together, as a unit. Moreover, the opening statement of the second letter does appear to preserve an allusion to the first: "I marvel not that the teachings of the evil one had such rapid success" (in possible reference to "they overthrow the faith of some").

5. Gerard Luttikhuizen, "The Apocryphal Correspondence with the Corinthians and the Acts of Paul," in Jan Bremmer, ed., *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Kampen: Pharos, 1996), pp. 75–92.

6. Translations are taken from J. K. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*.

7. The letter presents an interesting notion of the incarnation, unlike anything in Paul's New Testament letters. Here God is said to have sent the Holy Spirit into

Mary so that Christ could be born of her (vv. 5, 13–14). God also sent a “portion of the Spirit” into the Jewish prophets, as a kind of preliminary to the sending of the Spirit into Mary. This appears to be a kind of Spirit Christology comparable to the Logos Christology of contemporary thinkers such as Justin (where the Logos is in the Greek philosophers, but becomes fully manifest in Christ).

8. At least, no scholar of the Western world. For anyone with residual doubts, S. Johnston devotes fifty-five pages to a demonstration (“La Correspondance apocryphe,” pp. 78–133).

9. In my judgment M. Rist is precisely wrong to claim that the author’s “indistinct echoes of Paul’s words” were not “designed to give his composition an appearance of authenticity.” See M. Rist, “III Corinthians as a Pseudepigraphic Refutation of Marcionism,” *Iliff Review* 26 (1969): 55.

0. Rist, “III Corinthians,” p. 58. Rist gives six very good points of comparison with what is known of Marcion and one with Apelles. Klijn (“Apocryphal Correspondence”), however, makes a valid objection to this view: Apelles maintained that one angel, not a plural number of angels, was the creator. Rist sees this as a trivial difference.

1. Hérésie et orthodoxie selon la correspondance apocryphe entre les Corinthiens et l’Apôtre Paul,” in *Orthodoxie et Hérésie dans l’Eglise ancienne*, ed. H. D. Altendorf. *Cahiers de la Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 17 (1993): 21–63.

2. “Über den apokryphen Briefwechsel des Apostels Paulus mit den Korinthern,” *Theologische Boten* (1896).

3. Rist, “III Corinthians,” pp. 130–31.

4. “Apocryphal Correspondence,” p. 22.

5. Ibid., p. 91. Italics his.

6. “L’ensemble des conceptions gnostiques qui circulaient à son époque.” *La correspondance apocryphe.”* p. 222. A different approach to establishing the opposition is proposed in a recent study by Benjamin White, who suggests that rather than trying to identify the false teachers by what is said about them, it may be better to see how “Paul” is being constructed as their opponent; as it turns out, this Paul is very much like the Paul of the Pastoral epistles and of Irenaeus. The opponents, then, take contrary views. Benjamin L. White, “Reclaiming Paul? Reconfiguration as Reclamation in 3 Corinthians,” *JECS* 17 (2009): 497–523.

7. Johnston gives a nice synoptic comparison of the two passages, but points out a key difference: whereas 1 Clement is simply interested in demonstrating that there will be a resurrection, 3 Corinthians stresses that it will specifically be a

resurrection “of the flesh.”

8. In support, for example, of Walter Bauer’s claim that the problem addressed by 1 Clement is a group of Gnostics in Corinth. See *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, pp. 105–6.

9. See p. 433 below.

0. See note 66.

1. Quotations taken from the translation of Birger Pearson in Marvin Meyer, ed., *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*.

2. See Birger Pearson, “Melchizedek,” in Marvin Meyer, ed., *Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, pp. 597–98.

3. The fragmentary reference to the name Gamaliel is secure, in light of the rest of the text. The verb is unfortunately missing; “snatch away” is Pearson’s hypothesis. In any event, the Sethian focus is clear.

4. Here and in the pages that follow I will use the translation of Knut Schäferdiek, in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2.

5. Translation of Charles Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book Part II* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1938), 191.

6. Ign. Eph. 7.2; my own translation, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1 in LCL.

7. “… die einfachste Lösung [scheint] die Annahme zu sein, daß in Melch der Grad der sekundären Verchristlichung der sethianischen Gnosis eine solche Stärke erreicht hat, daß es zu einer kategorialen Grenzüberschreitung gekommen ist und der Sethianismus hier seinen gnostischen Charakter verloren hat. Das heißt, Melch würde einen verchristlichten Sethianismus repräsentieren, der überhaupt nicht mehr gnostisch ist.” “Melchisedek (NHC IX, 1), in Hans-Martin Schenke, Hans-Gebhard Bethge, and Ursula Ulrike Kaiser, eds., *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), p. 475.

8. See Carl Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung. Ein katholisch-apostolisches Sendschreiben des 2. Jh*. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1919).

9. *Le testament en Galilée de notre-Seigneur Jésus Christ* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1912).

0. See further Charles E. Hill, “The *Epistula Apostolorum:* An Asian Tract from the Time of Polycarp,” *JECS* 7 (1999): 1–53. J. de Zwaan bypasses the dating provided by chapter 17 in favor of the issues raised and resolved concerning the Quartodeciman controversy, but as a result dates the work almost certainly too late to 195 CE; “Date and Origin of the Epistle of the Eleven Apostles,” in *Amicitiae Corolla: A Volume of Essays Presented to James Rendel Harris, D.Litt., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. H. G. Wood (London:

University of London Press, 1933), 344–55. So too J. K. Elliott’s claim that the “consensus” places the text in the third quarter of the second century does not take chapter 17 with sufficient seriousness (*The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 556). Options for the location of the composition are almost literally all over the map, Asia, Syria, and Alexandria being the leading suspects. In addition to the articles of Hill and de Zwaan, see A. Stewart-Sykes, “The Asian Context of the New Prophecy and of *the Epistula Apostolorum*” *VC* 51 (1997): 416–38.

1. *Studien zur Epistula Apostolorum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965). The more recent full-length study of Julian Hills, *Tradition and Composition in the Epistula Apostolorum* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), is less concerned with the theological and polemical investments of the text than with its structure, composition, and the relation of tradition and redaction.

2. “Läßt sich weder als ein Dokument des Urchristentums noch der Gnosis noch des Frühkatholizismus begreifen.” On docetism: “The fact that Jesus is risen in the flesh has therefore meaning only as a fact that is supposed to demonstrate the reliability of Jesus’s teaching” (“Das Faktum, daß Jesus im Fleische auferstanden ist, hat mithin nur die Bedeutung eines Tatbeweises, der die Gläubigkeit der von Jesus verkündigten Lehre demonstrieren soll”). Further, “The determination of the Risen One’s bodiliness serves only as proof and for the confirmation of the teaching concerning the resurrection of the flesh. The Epistula Apostolorum is thus quite distinct from the views of Ignatius and Irenaeus” (“Die Feststellung der Leiblichkeit des Auferstandenen dient nur zum Beweis und zur Bestätigung der Lehre von der allgemeinen Auferstehung im Fleische. Von den Anschauungen des Ignatius und des Irenäus ist die Epistula Apostolorum weit geschieden”; p. 60). I could not disagree more. Throughout his *Studien* Hornschuh uses an essentialized understanding of what it means to be “Christian” and shows that the Epistula Apostolorum does not stack up well against it.

3. Translations of C. Detlef G. Muller in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*.

4. See p. 397.

5. “In the most worrisome fashion, the author thus touches upon the pseudepigraphal activity of the Gnostics who in addition to the general instruction during their public teaching had chosen in particular the postresurrection period for their special revelations” (“Damit streift der Verfasser auf das bedenklichste der pseudepigraphische Schriftstellerei der Gnostiker, die neben der allgemeinen Unterweisung während der öffentlichen Lehrtätigkeit besonders die Zeit nach der Auferstehung für ihre

Spezialoffenbarungen sich ausgesucht hatten”). Schmidt, *Gespräche*, p. 202.

6. *Gespräche*, p. 198.

7. “Man [wird] schwerlich bestreiten können, daß wichtige Partien des Briefes nicht anders zu verstehen sind denn als Widerlegung der Gnostiker,” Hornschuh, *Studien*, p. 7. Hornschuh tried to be more precise in naming the opponents, and settled on a group of Basilideans (p. 94). Most scholars today are, rightly, more reserved in thinking that we can pinpoint one Gnostic sect over another. Among other things, if the Basilideans were in view, why are they set under the guise specifically of Simon and Cerinthus? It is better to think here in terms of a general polemic against Gnostic teachings found among a number of groups.

8. See, e.g., Pheme Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980).

9. Hornschuh, *Studien*, p. 7.

0. Only the opening letter of the account, not the revelation dialogue, is forged.

1. The first critical edition was produced by Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1875), pp. 561–76.

2. Pervo is unusual in seeing the letter as something other than a pastiche; he wants to stress the epistolary character of the piece, as constructed, and to read it, then, with a generous spirit. See *Making of Paul*, pp. 106–9.

3. “Elle est en effet aussi anodine que possible.” *Les actes de Paul et ses lettres apocryphes* … (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1913), p. 321.

4. “Der Brief [ist] ein armseliges Elaborat ohne jede persönliche Note des Verfassers ohne Spur von Häresie, ohne Tendenz und Zweck”; “Die pseudo-Paulinischen Briefe,” *Bib 6* (1925): 190.

5. “Es ist übrigens nach Inhalt und Form die wertloseste Urkunde, die aus dem kirchlichen Altertum auf uns gekommen ist”; *Apocrypha IV: Die apokryphen Briefe des Paulus an die Laodicener und Korinther*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1931), p. 3.

6. Viz., “Why Was the Insipid Letter to the Laodiceans Written?” *NTS* 48 (2002): 132–41.

7. Pink (“Die pseudo-Paulinischen Briefe”) argued that the author of the Muratorian Fragment did not realize that the Marcionites had renamed Ephesians Laodiceans (as Tertullian indicates) and so supposed that a separate letter must have existed, not being familiar with the letter that we now have.

8. For a full listing, see Pink, “Die pseudo-Paulinischen Briefe.”

9. See Burnet, “Pourquoi,” p. 132.

0. Thus ibid., p. 133.

1. See Vouaux, *Les actes*, p. 320.

2. For Westcott see note 91; J. B. Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (London: Macmillan, 1904), pp. 291–92. Lightfoot provided a retroversion to the “original” Greek.

3. See Harnack *Apocrypha IV*. Pink had argued that the Graecisms, cited by Lightfoot, do not require a Greek original, since so much of the letter is drawn from Pauline works originally penned in Greek. He goes on to argue that the letter draws on vocabulary invented by Tertullian (thus “dilectio” and “retractus”) and so was written in Latin no earlier than the mid-third century. But the first occurrence of the terms in Tertullian does not prove that he invented them. Their appearance in the letter therefore indicates nothing about its original language or date.

4. Thus, for example, Vouaux, *Les actes* and Pink, “Die pseudo-Paulinischen Briefe.”

5. Chrysostom, *Homily 12* on Col. 4:16.

6. The fullest statement of the view is found in *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott; eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der Katholischen Kirche*, “Beilage III: Das Apostolikon Marcion,” part D: “Der Laodicener-und der Alexandrinerbrief” (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1924), pp. 134*–49*, which is based on an article published the previous year in *Sitzungsberichte der Preuß. Akademie*, Nov. 1, 1923.

7. “Diese Beobachtungen entscheiden: unser Brief ist eine Marcionitische Fälschung.” *Marcion*, p. 143*.

8. “Pourquoi.”

9. Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung*, p. 229.

0. The fullest and best account of the discovery and of the codicological issues involved is in Peter van Minnen, “The Greek *Apocalypse of Peter*,” in Jan Bremmer and István Czachesz, eds., *The Apocalypse of Peter* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), pp. 15–39.

1. G. Cavallo and H. Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period, A.D. 300–800* (London: University of London, Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), no. 41.

2. The first full study of the text of the Akhmim text was Dieterich’s *Nekyia; Beiträge zur Erklärung der neuentdeckten Petrusapokalypse* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893), conducted, obviously, prior to the discovery of the more accurate Ethiopic version.

3. Grébaut, “Littérature éthiopienne ps. Clémentine. La second venue du Christ

et la resurrection des morts," *ROC* (1907): 139–51; (1910): 198–214, 307–23, 425–39; M. R. James, "A New Text of the Apocalypse of Peter," *JTS* 12 (1910/11): 36–54, 362–83, 573–83.

14. Thus Müller: "That the Ethiopic version is authentic and offers the original text of the Apocalypse of Peter, albeit in parts somewhat distorted, can scarcely be contested any longer today." C. Detlef G. Müller in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2.625.

15. "The Greek *Apocalypse*," p. 28.

16. See Dennis D. Buchholz, *Your Eyes Will Be Opened: A Study of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 17. Buchholz counts twelve direct references to the account and eighteen indirect references (pp. 20–81). A more conservative presentation can now be found in Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, eds., *Das Petrusevangelium und die Petrusapokalypse: Die griechischen Fragment mit deutscher und englischer Übersetzung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 87–99.

17. Richard Bauckham, "The *Apocalypse of Peter*: A Jewish Christian Apocalypse from the Time of Bar Kokhba," *Apocrypha* 5 (1994): 7–111; reprinted in Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 160–258. Original pages are indicated here. Buchholz, *Your Eyes Will Be Opened*.

18. Translations taken from C. Detlef G. Müller in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*.

19. Van Minnen, "The Greek *Apocalypse*."

20. Eibert Tigchelaar, "Is the Liar Bar Kokhba? Considering the Date and the Provenance of the Greek (Ethiopic) *Apocalypse of Peter*," in Bremmer and Czachesz, eds., *The Apocalypse of* Peter, pp. 63–77.

21. James A. Brooks, "Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon," *SecCent* 9 (1992): 41–55.

22. *Apocalypse of Peter*, pp. 19–20.

23. István Czachesz, "The Grotesque Body in the *Apocalypse of Peter*," in Bremmer and Czachesz, eds., *The Apocalypse of Peter*, p. 108.

24. See Callie Callon, "Sorcery, Wheels, and Mirror Punishment in the *Apocalypse of Peter*," *JECS* 18 (2010): 29–49.

25. "The Grotesque Body."

26. Terence V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies*: "It is therefore difficult to determine the precise reason for the writer's appeal to the Peter-figure." Smith goes on to suggest that the references to Peter's martyrdom in Rome (Eth 14, Rainer fragment) may provide a clue, but then decides not: "though the martyrdom is

referred to, the writer does not attempt to use it as a buttress for any Petrine/Roman primacy." So too he thinks that a concern for persecution related to Peter cannot explain it (p. 48).

27. Ch. 14, translation of Buchholz.

28. *Your Eyes Will Be Opened*, p. 396.

29. The most important recent edition is T. Silverstein and A. Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul: A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions* (Geneva: P. Cramer 1997).

30. Translation of H. Duensing and Aurelio de Santos Otero, in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*.

31. Thus, for example, Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 616.

32. T. Silverstein "The Date of the 'Apocalypse of Paul,'" *MS* 24 (1962): 335–48; P. Piovanelli, "Les origines de l'Apocalypse de Paul reconsidérées," *Apocrypha* 4 (1993): 25–64, esp. 45–59.

33. Anthony Hilhorst, "The *Apocalypse of Paul*: Previous History and Afterlife," in Jan Bremmer and István Czachesz, eds., *The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), pp. 1–22. Piovanelli disputes these data, claiming that neither of the passages of Origen need necessarily refer to the Apocalypse and noting that all of our surviving witnesses derived from the fifth-century edition of the text (so that there are no physical remains of the earlier version). Duensing and de Santos Otero concur, marshaling the odd argument that since Sozomen indicates that "none of the ancients" knew the document, Origen could not have quoted it.

34. Augustine *Tract. Ioh*. 98, 8. Translation of John Rettig, *Augustine: Tractates on the Gospel of John* FC, 90 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1994).

35. *Ecclesiastical History* 7.19. Translation of Chester D. Hartranft, *NPNF*, second series, vol. 2.

36. See p. 125. A comparable account is found, most famously, in Dictys. For other discovery narratives, see V. Saxer, *Morts, Martyrs, reliques, en Afrique Chrétienne aux premiers siècle* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1980, 245–46); F. Bovon, "The Dossier on Stephen, the First Martyr, *HTR* 96 (2003): 279–315; Pierluigi Piovanelli, "The Miraculous Discovery of the Hidden Manuscript, or the Paratextual Function of the Prologue to the Apocalypse of Paul," in Bremmer and Czachesz, *The Visio Pauli*, pp. 23–49; and esp. W. Speyer, *Bücherfunde*.

37. Piovanelli has argued that by the time of the writing—after the triumph of Christianity starting in 313 CE—the idea of an apocalyptic renewal of the

heavens and earth had given way to an individualized judgment in the afterlife. That may be true enough, but it almost certainly was not a shift created by the conversion of the emperor and the massive shifts of religious allegiance that occurred in its wake, since we have earlier evidence of this eschatological transformation, most notably in the Apocalypse of Peter of the mid-second century.

38. Duensing and de Santos Otero (p. 715) oddly enough take this as an indication of the *late* date of the account.

39. Czachesz finds it significant that there is nothing said about the torment of Christian persecutors, and argues on these grounds that the final recension must have occurred some time after Constantine. Thus "Torture in Hell and Reality. The *Visio Pauli*," in Bremmer and Czachesz, eds., *The Visio Pauli*, pp. 130–43.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Forgeries Arising from Later Theological Controversies

If the various theological controversies from the end of the third century and into the fourth generated a large number of literary forgeries, most of them have since been lost. The ones that survive are not modern discoveries but old standards, known throughout the ages because, in no small measure, these authors were unusually successful in their deceitful endeavors. One of the most historically significant of these works was the forged Ignatian letters, to which I will devote the greatest attention in this chapter. But we would do well to return to two other forgeries that we have examined in previous contexts, as, in part, their production was spurred by the theological controversies of their day.

THE ABGAR CORRESPONDENCE

We have already discussed the forged correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar Uchama in the context of anti-Jewish polemic.[1] These letters do not only malign Jews for their role in the death of Jesus, however; they also function in a more patently theological way. As Han J. W. Drijvers has shown, the letters appear to have been forged as an anti-Manichaean polemic.

As we have seen, the letters appear in the context of the larger Abgar legend, known from both Eusebius and the *Doctrina Addai*. My primary concern here is not with the legend per se. Even though it is certainly a fabrication of later times, it is not a forgery. The correspondence at the beginning of the legend, however, is forged, or rather doubly forged, one letter allegedly written by the king of Edessa and the other by Jesus himself. Taken as a Gestalt, the letters and the legend have been subject to considerable dispute. Burkitt argued that the complex grew out of a historical kernel, in which the Christian conversion of Abgar VIII the Great (177–212 CE) was retrojected back onto Abgar V Uchama (ruler: 4 BCE–7 CE and 13–50 CE) in order to provide a greater antiquity for the church of Edessa.[2] W. Bauer argued, in contrast, that the entire legend, including the letters, was an invention ex nihilo, meant to support the claims of the orthodox party in Edessa to have an apostolic origin.[3] J. Segal argued that the complex originated as a Christian parallel and counterpart to the story of the conversion to Judaism of the royal dynasty of Adiabene, as preserved in

Josephus.[4] And there have been other theories.[5]

In a series of publications Drijvers has shown the problems with these various views, before reaching his own conclusion[6]: "The Abgar legend likely arose at the end of the third century in Edessa as a propaganda text for the orthodoxy of that era."[7] Specifically, the propaganda is directed against a dominant form of Syrian Manichaeanism.

As I argued earlier, however, in contrast to Drijvers, the letters appear to have originated independently of the legend.[8] Even so, they too, as well as the legend, may have arisen during an anti-Manichaean campaign by orthodox Christians in Edessa. The grounds for seeing the correspondence in this light are given by Drijvers, who notes not only that letters were important to the Manichaean tradition in general, but also that, as known from Augustine, the Manichees claimed to have letters of Christ in particular (*Contra Faust*. 28.4). There are convincing reasons for seeing the Abgar correspondence as a counterforgery designed to undercut the claims (and possibly even the letters) of the Manichees.

Especially significant, in this regard, is Jesus' promise to Abgar in the second letter: "After I have ascended I will send you one of my disciples to heal your illness and to provide life both to you and to those who are with you."[9] This appears to be an allusion to John 16:7–8 and its promise of the sending of the Spirit: "It is better for you that I depart; for if I do not depart, the Comforter will not come to you; and if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convince the world.…" As Drijvers notes, Mani understood himself to have been sent in fulfillment of this Johannine promise. The letter of Jesus, then, provides a counterclaim. Moreover, Mani understood himself to be sent from God as a healer: "I am a physician [doctor] from Babylon," he says to the Sassanic king Shapur, whom he then heals—a close parallel to what is said to be about to happen to Abgar, not through the coming of Mani but through his counter, the apostle to be sent from Jesus.[10] Drijvers concludes: "It becomes clear that the reply Jesus sends to Abgar is a trenchant version of the saying concerning the Paraclete, which is perhaps intended to counter Manichaean claims and the Manichaean mission."[11] For this correspondence, Christianity will establish itself with the appearance of Jesus' apostle, not with the coming of missionaries from Mani.[12]

Drijvers notes that there is an internal discrepancy between the letter of Jesus and the legend of Addai. The letter claims that Jesus will send an apostle to Abgar, but in the legend, it is Judas Thomas who does so. This is "an anomaly" in the sequence of the narrative."[13] But neither Drijvers nor anyone else who sees the letters as, originally, a piece, has an adequate explanation for the

discrepancy. In fact, as seen earlier, the disjuncture is easiest accounted for by assuming that the letters and legend both sprang from the same polemical impulse, but were only secondarily added together. This would explain, as well, why they had separate histories of transmission (Egeria, for example, knows the letters but betrays no knowledge of the legend).[14]

At the same time, the impulse behind the legend appears to have been very much like that behind the earlier letters. As Drijvers repeatedly emphasizes, one of Mani's first apostles, sent in 240 CE into the Roman empire where he healed and converted the queen of Palmyra, Zenobia, was named Addai. This cannot be a coincidence. Now the one (a Christian apostle) who comes to Edessa to heal and convert the King is Addai. Or, one might think, the *real* Addai: "This is an ingenious piece of propaganda: A *Christian* apostle in rivalry with Mani, whose best-known apostle was actually called Addai."[15] "The Christian Addai is a borrowing from Manichaeism."[16] Drijvers points out other, probably noncoincidental, similarities between Manichean legends and the Abgar tradition.[17] The conclusion to be drawn from these parallels is clear: "The Abgar legend is a document of Christian propaganda which originated in a historical situation in Edessa at the end of the third century, in which the Manichean version of the Christian faith and the Manichean mission were sharply threatening orthodoxy, which formed only a minority."[18]

This propaganda campaign, however, took place in stages. It started with a set of forged letters between Jesus and the King of Edessa, which had their own history of transmission; it continued with a similarly oriented set of stories; it came to fruition in the combining of the two sets of documents. The combination yielded a notable inconsistency that was overlooked in antiquity, and is still ignored by scholars today. But the final product ultimately proved valuable for the orthodox community of Edessa.

THE PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE HOMILIES AND RECOGNITIONS

We have already considered the Pseudo-Clementines in relation to their "Jewish" orientation and their resultant anti-Pauline (or possibly anti-Marcionite) polemic. Here I can say just a few words about other theological issues involved in their production.

The final editions of both the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* bear the marks of the time of their redaction, as both appear to have been edited sometime in the fourth century by Christians with "Arian" tendencies.[19] There is little to indicate that this redactor was intent on advancing his Arian views with polemical intent,

however, and so I need say but little about the matter.

The common view of the *Homilies* was expressed well over a century ago in an influential study by Charles Bigg. From his analysis of *Hom*. 20:7, Bigg concluded: “If we suppose that we have in the present *Homilies* the product of an Arian Christian of Syriac nationality who fancied that he found in Ebionitism a solution of the great problem—a historical and quasi-philosophical doctrine of the Arian savior—we should not perhaps go far wrong.”[20]

This general perspective is widely shared today, for example, in the most recent full-length study of Nicole Kelley.[21] So too *Rec*. 3.2–11 has long been recognized as containing an Arian perspective. The theology of the passage was so problematic—confused, confusing, or dangerous—that Rufinus tells us that he refused to include it in his translation:

> There are also in both collections some dissertations concerning the Unbegotten God and the Begotten, and on some other such subjects, which, to say nothing more, are beyond our comprehension. These, therefore, as being beyond our powers, I have chosen to reserve for others, rather than to produce in an imperfect state.[22]

This is not to say that there are not theological polemics in the Pseudo-Clementines. Indeed, Kelley has made a compelling case that the books do have polemical intent. Eschewing questions of sources, she examines the final form of the text of the *Recognitions* for what it can tell us about the concerns of the editor, living in fourth-century Syria. In her view, the prominent motif that “true knowledge” can come only from the prophets of Scripture, and in particular from the True Prophet (Christ), is meant to function polemically, in order to counter other popular avenues of knowledge widely used in the author’s environment. In particular, the author/editor is intent on combating those who insist on the epistemological importance of both astrology and philosophy. That is why the heroes of the tale are shown to be experts in both disciplines, and yet converts away from them. They personally know what astrology and philosophy can provide, and they have realized their ultimate shortcomings: “Despite its insistence on its heroes’ expertise in the different paths to knowledge, the text also suggests that philosophy and astrology cannot really provide the access to true knowledge which they claim.… True knowledge comes only from prophets.”[23]

The author was confronted with a maelstrom of religious opinion, belief, and doctrine in his fourth-century Syrian environment. Rather than attack any one set

of false teachings, he takes them on all at once, setting forth the true understanding of religion in opposition to any who stand in a different tradition or take another theological view. As Kelley summarizes:

> In an environment characterized by a multitude of competing truth claims, the *Recognitions* functions as a multi-pronged attack not just against *one* group such as the Marcionites or Pauline Christians, but against several different varieties of belief. In this way the text redescribes the field of competition, so that it ceases to be a bewildering array of rival religious claimants and becomes something more manageable: a choice between prophetic and false knowledge, and ultimately a choice between salvation or damnation.[24]

THE PSEUDO-IGNATIAN LETTERS

Arguably the most historically influential set of forgeries of the late fourth century are the Pseudo-Ignatian letters. As has long been recognized, these were produced in the context of the Christological controversies racking the church at the time. Over the centuries they came to be used in a wide variety of other contexts, most notably in the wake of the English Reformation, in the numerous vitriolic exchanges over the validity of church hierarchy between the likes of Anglican Archbishop and scholar extraordinaire James Ussher and the young but outspoken Puritan John Milton.[25]

In addition to the seven Ignatian letters widely regarded as authentic today, ten other letters were circulated at various times and places in the medieval and early modern period. These ten come in two corpora. One corpus appears to have been a late medieval addition to the collection, and so will not concern us here. This comprises four letters, two from Ignatius to John, the disciple of Jesus, one addressed to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the last a reply from Mary to Ignatius. The forger of these short missives appears to have had access to the so-called Long Recension of Ignatius, about which I will speak in a moment, in particular the forged letter of Ignatius to Mary of Cassabola, which is addressed to χριστόφορος θυγάτηρ Μαρία, christifera filia Maria. The letter to the Blessed Virgin uses the same epithet, "christiferae mariae suus Ignatius" and indicates that the author has written to her before. These four letters are only in Latin, probably their original language. Lightfoot plausibly suggested that they date no earlier than the eleventh century. Nonetheless, the forger was inordinately successful with his deceit: there are far more manuscripts of this

correspondence than of the Long Recension itself, and far more quotations from it. As Lightfoot indicates, “in some quarters indeed S. Ignatius was only known through them.”[26]

The remaining six forgeries circulated with heavily interpolated versions of the seven authentic Ignatian letters. For reasons we will see, it is almost universally thought that the interpolator and the forger were one and the same; taken together, it is these interpolated and forged letters that are usually referred to as the Long Recension.

The forgeries involve letters of Ignatius to the churches of Tarsus, Antioch, and Philippi; a personal letter to Hero, his successor to the bishopric of Antioch; a letter from Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius; and his reply. These six letters, along with the interpolated versions of the seven authentic letters, were known to be “Ignatius” until the mid-seventeenth century, when critical examinations of Ussher and others, and important manuscript discoveries, changed the picture. Problems were initially detected through comparisons of the texts of the letters with quotations of Ignatius in the writings of Eusebius and Theodoret. The differences were so stark that it was difficult, as Ussher indicated, to imagine “that one was reading the same Ignatius who was read in antiquity” (eundem legere se Ignatium qui veterum aetate legebatur).[27] In addition, it was noted that the Long Recension (the only one known at the time) contained serious anachronisms and revealing blunders, such as its references to Basilides and Theodotus among the false teachers Ignatius opposed (Trall. 11), when in fact they lived long after his day, and when he named Ebion a heresiarch (Philad. 6), as Tertullian and those after him had done. Moreover, it was noted that Eusebius knew of only seven letters—casting immediate doubts on the other six (*H.E.* 3.36).

Ussher was particularly taken by the fact that several late medieval writers,[28] including the thirteenth-century Robert Grossteste of Lincoln, cited the letters of Ignatius in a textual form that was different and shorter than that otherwise known. Ussher reasoned that an alternative textual tradition must have once existed, at least in England. He embarked on a mission to find remnants of this other tradition, and was rewarded in uncovering two Latin manuscripts that contained the seven Eusebian letters in a shorter form, which coincided with the medieval citations of the text, lacking the passages so obviously tied to the theological and ecclesiastical concerns of the fourth century (although these manuscripts included the additional, forged letters as well). On the basis of his discovery, in 1644 Ussher published a new Latin edition of the Ignatian corpus: just the Eusebian letters in the noninterpolated form (although Ussher considered

the letter to Polycarp spurious).[29]

Two years later, Ussher's views were confirmed by Isaac Voss's publication of a Greek manuscript from Florence that preserved six of the Eusebian letters in their shortened form—all but the letter to the Romans, which had a separate history of transmission.[30] Finally, in 1689 the French scholar T. Ruinart published the Greek text of Romans as uncovered in a tenth-century manuscript from Paris, making then the original form of the authentic corpus completely available.[31]

Debates over the full extent of the authentic Ignatian corpus continued to rage after the seventeenth century. In the mid-nineteenth century the flames of controversy were stoked by William Cureton, who claimed to have discovered manuscript evidence of an "original" corpus containing only condensed versions of the letters to Polycarp, Ephesians, and Romans.[32] But with the massively documented studies of Theodore Zahn and J. B. Lightfoot, the seven-letter corpus in the uninterpolated form posited and then discovered by Ussher and his successors was put on solid ground.[33] The twentieth century saw renewed questions, as authors such as R. Weijenborg, R. Joly, and J. Rius Camps, and most recently R. M. Hübner and T. Lechner, argued that some, or all, of the letters of the Middle Recension (= the uninterpolated seven letters known to Eusebius) were forged.[34] The majority of scholars remains unconvinced, however, and I take the common view here: the seven "Eusebian" letters go back to Ignatius (Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrneans, and Polycarp). These were interpolated and six additional letters were forged (Tarsians, Antiochians, Hero, Philippians, Mary Cassobola, and from Mary Cassobola), creating the Long Recension.[35]

The Author

It is widely and almost certainly correctly thought that the same person who interpolated the authentic Ignatian letters forged the remaining six. As Zahn and Lightfoot exhaustively demonstrated, the interpolations and the forgeries share many of the same verbal and stylistic features, ecclesiastical views, practical concerns, polemical targets, theological positions, and uses of Scripture; sometimes they even replicate the same passages and similar paraphrases. With respect to theological investments, for example, Lightfoot has argued that the "same doctrines are maintained, the same heresies assailed, and the same theological terms employed."[36] Amelungk has provided charts of the remarkable parallels between the forgeries and the interpolations, claiming that four-fifths of

the material of the former is paralleled in the latter. Of the letter to Hero he claims that it is “actually plagiarized from the [letter] to Polycarp.”[37]

The only serious challenge to the unity of authorship has come from Jack Hannah, who claimed that Lightfoot was right that the forger of the additional letters produced his work in the fourth century, but argued that the textual affinities of the Scripture citations in the interpolations indicate that they were made by a different person two centuries earlier, about 140 CE in Ephesus, “probably within twenty-five years of the originals.”[38] The interpolations were then used by the forger for his subsequent creations. This is an interesting view, but it was demolished in the one article devoted to its refutation, by Milton Brown, who effectively reasserted the traditional view.[39]

This traditional view maintains that the author was writing in the second part of the fourth century. Numerous features of the forged materials (including here, for the sake of convenience, the interpolations under the rubric of “forged”) show that they were written long after Ignatius’ day, not least the extensive citation of the writings that eventually became the Scriptures of the New Testament, not cited as canonical authorities by Ignatius himself. We will be considering this use of Scripture anon. There are also several telling anachronisms in the text, including not just the post-Ignatian heresiarchs of Tralles 11, already mentioned, but also a striking list of later church offices in Antiochians 12: “the subdeacons, the readers, the singers, the doorkeepers, the laborers, the exorcist, the confessors … the keepers of the holy gates.”[40] As Lightfoot notes, the first mention of the office of laborers is in the rescript of Constantius of 357 CE; the offices of doorkeepers and singers are first mentioned in in the canons of the Council of Laodicea of 363 CE. Moreover, “the fact that the writer can put such language into the mouth of S. Ignatius without any consciousness of a flagrant anachronism would seem to show that these offices were not very new when he wrote.”[41]

Somewhat less obvious, but equally compelling and of particular interest to our concerns here, the forger, as we will see, uses a good deal of coded theological language that, despite its frequent subtlety, betrays a concern for the Christological debates of the mid to late fourth century.

What is yet more striking, we appear to have two other works from the hand of this same author, in one of which he names himself. As we have already seen, the forger of the Pseudo-Ignatians appears also to have forged the Apostolic Constitutions, another work with polemical intent, not written in the name of a one-time companion of the apostles, but of the apostles themselves, and allegedly delivered by Ignatius’s near contemporary Clement of Rome.[42] It is

now also widely recognized, based on the investigative work of D. Hagedorn, that the forger also produced a Commentary on Job, and that his name was Julian.[43]

In the manuscript tradition, this commentary is attributed to Origen, but that cannot be right, as Hagedorn shows. Not only does the theology differ from Origen's in significant ways, but the book also mentions Lucian of Antioch as a person of the past; Lucian, however, died some fifty years after Origen. The catenae sometimes ascribe the work to an unspecified Julian, which has often been taken to be Julian of Halicarnassus. But R. Draguet long ago showed that this cannot be right either: the commentary represents an arianizing theology of the second half of the fourth century.[44] One manuscript of the catenae attributes it instead to Julian, a deacon of Antioch; and in fact Julian is named in the prologue of the commentary itself. This then is probably the author; he cannot, however, be identified with anyone else who bears the name from the period. All that we can learn about him comes from the works—one orthonymous and two forged—that he left behind.

The benefit of identifying the author of the Pseudo-Ignatians as Julian is that it helps solidify our knowledge of his views and perspectives, which are less guarded in the Job Commentary than elsewhere. The reasons are transparent: in his other two works he is claiming to be other people and so he was compelled to present his views under the guise of others. As a result, his theological views are often more opaque, most obviously in the Pseudo-Ignatians themselves, where a number of scholars, basing their judgments only on what was available to them, the texts themselves, have argued incessantly concerning the doctrinal investments of the forger, most maintaining that the author was one kind of Arian or another (e.g., Zahn, Harnack, Amelungk, Perler) or, instead, Apollinarian (Funk, Diekamp). A number of scholars have proposed specific authors—Eusebius of Emesa, Evagrius Ponticus, Euzoius—or persons closely connected with them.[45] Surveying the discussions up to his time, Hagedorn concludes that there is simply no *opinio communis*.[46]

In the commentary, on the other hand, the author was not hampered by the demands of his pseudepigraphic art from presenting in more straightforward fashion his own theological perspective. And here it is quite clear that he is an "Arian" of what was once called a "strong" sort, someone who would have been comfortable in many ways with the positions of, say, an Aetius or Eunomius.[47]

Hagedorn makes a compelling case that Julian authored all three works, on the basis of striking commonalities among them in theological views, dogmatic terminologies, topoi, and style. He provides a list of thirty-five points of contact

between the Job Commentary and the Apostolic Constitutions. Both works often deal with precisely the same topics, using precisely the same somewhat unusual expressions.[48] It is virtually impossible to imagine, as he notes, that two authors could independently attest such verbatim agreements in so many instances. Either two authors used the same source, or one author heavily edited or used the work of the other, or they are the same person. A careful analysis leads to the final result: Julian is the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions.[49]

Verbal parallels between the Job Commentary and Pseudo-Ignatius are also significant. Hagedorn cites numerous instances, most of them impressive. As just three examples:

ὦ πάντων δαιμόνων πονηρότερον ἐκ κακονοίας δαιμόνιον (Job Comm. 24.14)
ὦ πάντων πονηρῶν πνευμάτων πονηρότερον ἐκ κακονοίας πνεῦμα (Philipp. 11)

σοφὸς τοῦ κακοποιῆσαι. Τὸ δὲ καλὸν ὅτι ποτέ ἐστιν ἀγνοεῖ (Job Comm. 292.3)
σοφὸς γάρ ἐστι τοῦ κακοποιῆσαι. Τὸ δὲ καλὸν ὅτι ποτέ ἐστιν ἀγνοεῖ (Philipp. 4)

καὶ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐκστήσας τοὺς οὐδὲν αὐτὸν ἀδικήσαντας (Job Comm. 299.2)
καὶ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐκστήσας τοὺς οὐδὲν ἀδικήσαντάς σε (Philipp. 11)

On the basis of such verbatim similarities, Hagedorn concludes strongly: “The only possible explanation for the topical and linguistic/stylistic parallels between the three works is the identity of their author.”[50]

Moreover, this author, Julian, shows his theological cards in the Commentary on Job. A key passage is the loaded comment on Job 37:22–23:[51]

> There is no one who is similar (οὐκ ἔχων τὸν ὁμοιούμενον) to him [ὁ παντοκράτωρ] with respect to his being or his power. In being because he is ἀγέννητος; in power because he is the father of the son. Nor is anyone else the cause of all things or the παντοκράτωρ; nor is there another mediator of the genesis of these things except the μονογενὴς Θεός. . (There follows a citation of John 1:1–3). He is not the Word as a “voice” nor is he God, in the sense of having no beginning (ἄναρχος); but he is “Word” in the sense of being born directly from the will and power, not by the suffering of nature (οὐ πάθει τῆς φύσεως), not through a division of his being (οὐ διαιρέσει τῆς οὐσίας)…. Great is the glory of the All powerful; great is the honor due to him … ; he is incomparable both in nature and in power (ἀσυγκρίτου καὶ φύσει καὶ δυνάμει).. There is nothing equal to him [of the same substance] or like him (οὔτε οὖν ὁμοούσιόν τι ἐξ αὐτοῦ . . . οὔτε ὁμοιούσιον).. For he is incomparable,

> and we will find no other that is like him and his power (ἀσύγκριτος γάρ ἐστι καὶ. οὐχ εὑρήσομεν ἄλλον ὅμοιον αὐτῷ καὶ τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτοῦ).

> There is no one who is similar (οὐκ ἔχων τὸν ὁμοιούμενον) to him [ὁ παντοκράτωρ] with respect to his being or his power. In being because he is ἀγέννητος; in power because he is the father of the son. Nor is anyone else the cause of all things or the παντοκράτωρ; nor is there another mediator of the genesis of these things except the μονογενὴς Θεός. . (There follows a citation of John 1:1–3). He is not the Word as a "voice" nor is he God, in the sense of having no beginning (ἄναρχος); but he is "Word" in the sense of being born directly from the will and power, not by the suffering of nature (οὐ πάθει τῆς φύσεως), not through a division of his being (οὐ διαιρέσει τῆς οὐσίας)..... Great is the glory of the All powerful; great is the honor due to him … ; he is incomparable both in nature and in power (ἀσυγκρίτου καὶ φύσει καὶ δυνάμει).. There is nothing equal to him [of the same substance] or like him (οὔτε οὖν ὁμοούσιόν τι ἐξ αὐτοῦ . . . οὔτε ὁμοιούσιον).. For he is incomparable, and we will find no other that is like him and his power (ἀσύγκριτος γάρ ἐστι καὶ. οὐχ εὑρήσομεν ἄλλον ὅμοιον αὐτῷ καὶ τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτοῦ).

This strong rejection of both ὁμοούσιος and ὁμοιούσιος shows Julian's allegiances. For Hagedorn he was a "true-blood Arian"—specifically a disciple of Aetius or Eunomius. Since arguments over the term ὁμοούσιος did not appear until some thirty years after Nicea, starting with the Synod of Sirmium in 357 CE, this work must date sometime after that. And since, in his view, the neo-Arians did not survive the purge of Theodosius and the Council of Constantinople (381 CE), the work probably dates somewhat earlier. Hagedorn suggests a date between 357–365 and argues that the work was produced in Syria.[52]

This date works well for the forgery of letters in the name of Ignatius of Antioch as well. But several caveats are in order. For one thing, it is—as already intimated—inordinately difficult to get a handle on the theological views presented in the Pseudo-Ignatian letters themselves, in no small measure because so many nuances are involved with their language. Moreover, if we accept the identity of authorship among the three works of Julian, this does not mean he has expressed exactly the same views in all three. In no small measure that is because authors' views often shift over a period of time, especially in a period where theological niceties were being thrashed about and refined, and borders

were constantly shifting between what was acceptable and what was execrable. At no time was that more true than in the period between the second quarter and the end of the fourth century. As two extreme cases from opposing ends of the spectrum, there is Arius, who at the end of his life claimed to support the decisions of Nicea, and Marcellus of Ancyra, who retracted many of his most distinctive views once they could not stand up either to criticism or the test of time.[53] We should not, in short, simply assume that if Julian wrote both the Commentary to Job and the Pseudo-Ignatian forgeries, the theology between the works will be identical. In fact, there are many similarities, as the forged works embrace some kind of "Arian" perspective and attack views endorsed by Marcellus and his followers who supported a miahypostatic (to use Lienhard's phrase) view. But there are differences as well, and it is important not to suppose that the author was strictly neo-Arian at the time he produced his works.[54] On the contrary, as we will see, the Pseudo-Ignatians appear to take several stances that run counter to traditional neo-Arian views.

Purpose of the Forgeries

Possibly the most important aspect of the Pseudo-Ignatians has been almost entirely overlooked by previous scholars interested in learning the motivation behind the forgeries (and interpolations). This investigation has always proceeded by looking carefully at the nuances of the author's theological affirmations, to see whether he can best be described as a Nicene, Apollinarian, "semi-Arian," neo-Arian,[55] and so on. These affirmations are then set down in categories provided by systematic theology. This approach, however, has almost always missed the forest for the trees. In particular, scholars have worked hard to identify the author's theological alignments without asking why he may have wanted to create the forged materials in the first place. Thus, for example, the justly great Lightfoot, who argues that Pseudo-Ignatius cannot be located precisely: the author has some Arian leanings but is not exactly Arian, he is somewhat Apollinarian, but not really. Yet Lightfoot, in the end, never asks why the letters were forged. This is a question, in fact, that has scarcely ever been raised.

It is important to recognize that these letters were not meant to be a set of theological treatises, produced in the way modern systematic theologians produce theirs. As we will see, the letters are largely polemical, ostensibly, though not really, addressed to certain people and in almost every instance dealing with situations of conflict. This is widely known. But what has not been

sufficiently appreciated is that the letters do not explicitly attack positions of the author's own day. They instead appear, on the surface, to be directed to theological aberrations of the second century, aberrations that the forger—incorrectly, as it turns out—seems to have thought were already a problem in the early years of that century, in the days of Ignatius. The targets of all the explicit polemic are such Christological heresies as psilanthropism (where Christ is not divine but a "mere man"); Gnosticism and Marcionism (with the claim that the unknown God did not create this world and that Christ is not the son of the creator); the related, but not coterminous, problem of docetism (where Christ is not a human at all, but is fully God); and Sabellianism (where Christ and God the Father are not separate beings but one being in two modes of existence).

It is true that the proto-orthodox attacks against these various second-century heresies, in the works, say, of Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian, were replicated in the fourth century, as enemies of various theological persuasions accused their adherents of following tenets long denounced as heretical. Marcellus, for example, was regularly and roundly charged with being a kind of Sabellius redivivus, and accusations of psilanthropism were mutually leveled by heresiologists against one another.[56] But the striking feature of Pseudo-Ignatius' denunciations of heresies in nearly all of his explicit polemic is that, at least on the surface, they are phrased not in the sophisticated language of fourth-century Arian controversies, but in language that was, for the most part (though not entirely) appropriate two hundred years earlier. No wonder Hannah could think that the interpolations, at least, were roughly contemporaneous with Ignatius's own generation; on the surface they sound as if they are.

At the same time, there are places where the author used coded language that was sufficiently nuanced to express some of his key theological views. He evidently did so because he wanted to provide support for his own perspective and to show the genealogical lines of the tradition that could be traced back to a known postapostolic person—one known to the apostles—whom Eusebius indicates was the second bishop of Antioch after Euodius. The author forged these letters to show what Ignatius would have said as a leading heresiologist of his time, but more than this, as a reputed authority, both as the bishop of a major see, and above all as one of the first known Christian martyrs. As a concerned church leader, "Ignatius" naturally opposes false teaching, and this forger thinks, wrongly, that he knows what those teachings would have been in Ignatius's day. In some cases, he is off by several decades. Of equal importance, however, is that in the course of constructing this picture of Ignatius the martyr-heresiologist, the author slips in, here and there, theological views that are his real and ultimate

point. These are subtle and hard for us to track, but they are in there, embracing some kind of “Arian,” or at least dyohypostatic (again, Lienhard’s phrase) understanding of the godhead. The other heresies that are explicitly attacked, in other words, serve as “covers” for the real issues that the forger wants this authority to address.

And so, the solution to the dilemma of the Pseudo-Ignatian forgeries (including the interpolations) is to see the ostensible polemic as a smoke screen, used by a highly trained and intelligent author who sought to establish, explicate, and support his own theological position by putting it on the lips of a great proto-orthodox leader of the faith, the famed martyr bishop Ignatius. By having Ignatius attack heresies thought to be from his own day, the author afforded himself the opportunity, in other places, to express his real theological agenda, by having Ignatius proclaim a theology that was, in fact, the forger’s own.

Several subsidiary points need to be made before proceeding to a more detailed analysis. First, the author is clearly engaged, consciously, in the act of forgery, as is made clear both by all of his attempts at verisimilitude, some of which we will examine shortly, and by the fact that he altered in highly significant ways the authentic letters of Ignatius, in effect putting his own words on the pen of an author living more than a century and a half earlier. Moreover, the forger is not only concerned with theology and with conveying his particular Christological views under the authority of Ignatius. As is true of most authors, he has multiple interests.[57] These other interests include emphasizing the preeminence of the bishop, the ability of young men to serve as bishops, the importance of the church structure, the social relations of Christians, the relationship of church and state, and a large range of ethical issues, including opposition to rigorous asceticism.

Important Features of the Forgeries and Interpolations

I will not be able to provide an exhaustive examination of all the important features of the forger’s work. A full analysis, however, is long overdue, and a full critical commentary on the Pseudo-Ignatians (including the interpolations) is a major desideratum in the field.

It is clear, in any event, that the author has gone out of his way to make his work believably Ignatian through the myriad verisimilitudes he provides. Thus, for example, we have the opening statement of the letter to the Tarsians: “From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, not that I am devoured by brute beasts … but by beasts in the shape of men … I therefore the prisoner of Christ, who

am driven along by land and sea, exhort you" (ch. 1).[58] Or the opening statement of the letter to the Antiochians, "The Lord has rendered my bonds light and easy since I learnt that you are at peace"; or its postscript "I write this letter to you from Philippi"; or from a passage in medias res, "What I spoke to you while present I now write to you" (ch. 7). The letter to Hero, as might be expected, given its subject matter, is especially full of examples: "I hand over to thee the Church of Antioch…. The bishops Onesimus, Bitus, Damas, Polybius, and all they of Philippi (whence also I have written to thee), salute thee in Christ…" (chs. 7–8). "Salute Cassian, my host, and his most serious minded partner in life, and their very dear children…. Salute by name all the faithful in Christ that are at Laodicea. Do not neglect those at Tarsus…. I salute in the Lord Maris, the bishop of Neopolis…. Salute thou also Mary my daughter …" (ch. 9). Especially profligate in this respect is the letter to Mary, where "Ignatius" waxes eloquent on the competing merits of writing as opposed to speaking face-to-face, and in a later section where he pretends to be under military guard (ch. 4), although here, evidently, he is imagined as being under house arrest in Antioch (whence he can fulfill her request) rather than en route to Rome. Verisimilitudes are not lacking to the additional comments of the interpolation, as seen, for example, in Ephesians 12, "I am the very insignificant Ignatius, who have thrown my lot with those exposed to danger."

All the verisimilitudes in the world cannot compensate for the author's occasional slips, however, as noted earlier, both in his delineation of false teachers who came after Ignatius' day in Tarsians 11 and in the list of minor church offices, some of which are otherwise unattested until the second half of the fourth century (subdeacons, readers, singers, doorkeepers, laborers, exorcists, confessors; Antiochenes 12).

In the interpolations there is a steady effort to expand upon what is already found in the authentic letters, not always in theologically, or at least christologically, interested ways. And so, for example, in Magnesians 5, instead of the Ignatian comment "there are two kinds of coins, the one of God, the other of the world, and each of these has its special character stamped upon it" we have

> Two different characters are found among men—the one true coin, the other spurious. The truly devout man is the right kind of coin, stamped by God Himself. The ungodly man, again, is false coin, unlawful, spurious, counterfeit, wrought not by God but by the devil. If anyone is truly religious, he is a man of God; but if he is irreligious, he is a man of

> the devil, made such, not by nature, but by his own choice. The unbelieving bear the image of the prince of wickedness. The believing possess the image of their Prince….

Such expansions dominate the interpolations. The author is especially extravagant in his use of Scripture, in particular the writings that by his time had constituted the New Testament. And so, for example, in Ephesians 9, where Ignatius himself may indeed allude to both 1 Peter and John 12, the forger provides nine explicit citations to provide scriptural backing for his views, drawing from John 14, 16, 17; Psalm 119; 1 Peter 2, and Ephesians 1. Similar abundance can be found in Ephesians 10; Magnesians 8, 10, 12; Trallians 11; and Romans 8, 9.

In a number of instances the author tries to clear up difficult passages, often using more theologically loaded but still nuanced language. And so, in Magnesians 6, the Ignatian reference to deacons who are "entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the ages and has been manifest at the end" gets modified to language more acceptable to an author embroiled in later debates: "are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ. He, being begotten by the Father before the beginning of time, was God the Word, the only begotten son, and remains the same forever; for 'of his kingdom there shall be no end.'" Here, as we will see, is not just theology, but theological polemic, directed against those (of the fourth century) who denied that Christ was the Son before he became incarnate and those (same ones) who maintained that in fact the kingdom of Christ would indeed come to an end.

At other times the author's interests coincide roughly with those of Ignatius, who was thought to have not, perhaps, stressed a point with sufficient emphasis. Thus, on the question of the relationship of Christ and "Judaizers," Ignatius said in Magnesians 10: "It is outlandish to proclaim Jesus Christ and practice Judaism. For Christianity did not believe in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity." This gets changed to "it is absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue, and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end. For where there is Christianity there cannot be Judaism. For Christ is one…."

The Theological Investments

The most obvious and striking feature of the Pseudo-Ignatians is their theological investments. Theology is prominent in the author's mind; the letters written to the churches (Tarsians, Antiochians, Philippians) all begin,

immediately after the letter openings, with strong theological polemic. And so, for example, in the letter to the Tarsians, after extending an epistolary greeting, the author launches into his attack: "I have learned that certain of the ministers of Satan have wished to disturb you, some of them asserting that Jesus was born [only] in appearance…. Others, again, hold that He is a mere man, and others that this flesh is not to rise again …" (ch. 2). So too the letter to the Antiochenes, "[Guard] against those heresies of the wicked one which have broken in upon us, to the deceiving and destruction of those that accept them …" (ch. 1).

Many of the interpolations as well involve true and false belief, and it becomes quite clear, especially here, that the author sees doctrine as a matter of life and death—or rather of eternal life and eternal damnation: the one who "sets at nought His doctrine shall go into hell" (Eph. 16); "If any man does not stand aloof from the preacher of falsehood, he shall be condemned to hell" (Philad. 3). It is hard to imagine anything more important, then, than true teaching.

This teaching, for the author, involves a clear affirmation of the Trinity, a doctrine that is inserted throughout the authentic letters of Ignatius. And so, for example, in Trallians 1, the phrase "By the will of God and Jesus Christ" becomes "by the will of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, with the cooperation of the Spirit"; in the preface to Romans the statement "is named from Christ, and from the Father" becomes "is named from Christ, and from the Father, and is possessed of the Spirit"; and in Philadelphians 4, the phrase "according to [the will of] God" becomes "there is but one unbegotten Being, God, even the Father; and one only begotten Son, God, the Word and man; and one Comforter, the Spirit of Truth."

In many other instances, the theological affirmations are presented in ostensibly polemical fashion. As noted, the polemics appear, on the surface, to be directed against older heresies presumably imagined as obtaining in the days of Ignatius. Despite the anachronisms, the polemical objects can all be assigned the second century, rather than the late fourth century. And so we find the warning of Tarsians 2:

> Certain ministers of Satan have wished to disturb you, some of them asserting that Jesus was born only in appearance, was crucified in appearance, and died in appearance; others that He is not the son of the Creator, and others that He is Himself God over all. Others, again, hold that He is a mere man, and others that this flesh is not to rise again.

Here then are attacks on docetism ("in appearance"), Gnosticism (or

Marcionism; “not the son of the Creator”), Sabellianism (“God over all”), psilanthropism (“mere man”), and a condemnation of the flesh, such as found in the Gnostic works discussed in Chapter Thirteen.

A similar list applies to Antiochians 5, where some false teachers are said to declare “that there is but one God, only so as to take away the divinity of Christ.” Others confess Christ, “yet not as the Son of the Maker of the world, but of some other unknown being, different from Him whom the Law and prophets have proclaimed.” Others “[reject] the incarnation,” and others declare “Christ to be a mere man.” Here then one might think of Jewish Christianity (the unity of God without the divinity of Christ), Gnosticism, docetism, and adoptionism (or psilanthropism). A similar set of opponents is found in Hero 2, all of them second-century “deviations,” but some of them post-Ignatian.

Such opposition is also found outside the congregational letters, especially in the exchange with Mary Cassobola, the predominant purpose of which is to support the possibility of young men serving as bishops, but in which theological affirmations nonetheless appear, in clear opposition to such groups as the adoptionists on the one hand and the Marcionites on the other (Christ preexisted but became human through the Virgin Mary, in fulfillment of the prophets, ch. 1). It occurs in the interpolations as well, as in Trallians 6:

> They alienate Christ from the Father, and the law from Christ. They also calumniate His being born of the Virgin; they are ashamed of His cross; they deny His passion; and they do not believe His resurrection. They introduce God as a Being unknown; they suppose Christ to be unbegotten; and as to the Spirit, they do not admit that He exists. Some of them say that the Son is a mere man, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are but the same person, and that the creation is the work of God, not by Christ, but by some other strange power.

Even though, as we will see, some of this is coded language for theological conflicts of the author’s own day, a good deal of it could be directed against second-century Marcionites, adoptionists, docetists, Gnostics, and Sabellians. So too with an interpolation in Philadelphians 6, which explicitly attacks Simonians and Ebionites, and without naming them takes on the Marcionites, the Gnostics, the psilanthropists, and the docetists for good measure, not to mention those who are either excessively ascetic (calling “lawful wedlock, and the procreation of children, destruction and pollution” and deeming “certain kinds of food abominable”) or heedlessly licentious (affirming that “unlawful unions are a

good thing" and placing "the highest happiness in pleasure").

If we examine what the author affirms, and not merely what he rejects, a clearer picture of his place in the theological and christological debates of the fourth century begins to emerge. To start with, the forger stresses that there is one God, who alone is unbegotten, ὁ μόνος ἀγέννητος θεός (Hero 6; Eph. 7; cf. Antioch. 7; Magn. 7). It is only the heretics that teach that Christ too is ἀγέννητος (Philip. 7; Trall. 6). The one God is above all things (τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν ὁλῶν; Hero 7; Philip. 1), and he alone is almighty εἷς θεός ἐστιν ὁ παντοκράτωρ; Magn. 8.) This, as we will see, sets God the Father in contrast to his μονογενὴς υἱός,, who is mentioned alongside him, but is begotten, not unbegotten, and is not God over all things, and does the will of the Father (e.g., Philip. 1; Philad. 4; Eph. 3). Throughout his work, the forger tries to walk the tightrope that led to the fall of many a fourth-century theologian, by avoiding clearly heretical teachings from different ends of the spectrum. And so, from Philippians 2, we learn that for him there is "one God and Father, and not two or three," just as there are not "three Sons or three Paracletes." There is, instead, "one Father, and one Son, and one Paraclete." But also, and equally important, there is not "one [person] having three names, nor … three [persons] who became incarnate." And so the author is determined to avoid a Sabellian view on the one hand, but some kind of tritheism on the other. For him, there may be one God, but there are "three" (what? beings?) who are "possessed of equal honour" ((ἀλλ' εἰς τρεῖς ὁμοτίμους).). The latter phrase, as we will see, has wreaked no little havoc among interpreters trying to make sense of the author's views (is ὁμοτίμους the same, or equivalent, to ὁμοούσιους? Or not?).

Some of the author's most emphatic teachings concern his views, specifically, of Christ. He has no difficulty calling Christ "God," although in most instances the term is anarthrous, and is, in the editing of the authentic Ignatians, made anarthrous. Thus Christ can be called θεὸς και ἄνθρωπος (Philip. 5); he is the "flesh-bearing God" σαρκοφόρον θεόν (Smyrn. 5); or, with the rare use of the article, the God Word τὸν θεὸν λόγον (Smyrn. 1). It is only the false teachers who preach God but disaffirm/deny/destroy Christ's divinity καταγγέλλει θεὸν ἐπ' ἀναιρέσει τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεότητος; Antioch. 5).

Christ is emphatically not God the Father or fully equal to him. Hero 6 is typical in making the differentiation: ὁ μόνος ἀγέννητος θεὸς καὶ ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.. With some rhetorical flair, the author attacks Satan for claiming that Christ is "God over all, and the Almighty" (Philip. 7). In Antiochenes 14 he differentiates between the one who is unbegotten and the one who is begotten "before the ages" (ὁ ὢν μόνος ἀγέννητος διὰ τοῦ πρὸ αἰώνων γεγεννημένου).. The

distinction between Father and Son is carefully kept, even where the Son is called "God." This can be seen, for example in the changes that the interpolator made to the famous hymnlike confession of Ephesians 7. No longer is Christ himself called, as in the authentic Ignatius, the "one physician." Now it is God "the Father and the Begetter of the only-begotten Son" who is "our physician"; at the same time "we have also as a physician τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν θεὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστόν.." As seen, Christ is still divine, but now, in this new version of the passage, Christ is no longer called ἀγέννητος;; quite the contrary, only God is called ὁ μόνος ἀληθινὸς, the Lord of all, the father and begetter of the θεός, ὁ ἀγέννητος καὶ ἀπρόσιτος,. Christ, significantly, is indeed the "only-begotten Son and Word before time began"; he later became a human through the virgin Mary.

The distinction between Christ and God is seen as well in the interpolator's elimination from Ignatius's letters of the so-called exchange of predicates, so that, for example, the "blood of God" becomes the "blood of Christ" (Eph. Pref.). Similarly, the author typically changes phrases such as "Jesus Christ our God": καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, in Eph. 1, becomes κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν.. So too in the preface to Romans he shifts from ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν, to ἐν θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.. There are a few occasions, however, where the editor appears to be inconsistent, using the article in describing Christ's divine status, as in the Preface to Romans: κατὰ πίστιν καὶ ἀγάπην Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν; and later in chapter 6: ἐπιτρέψατέ μοι μιμητὴν εἶναι πάθους Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ μου. One cannot immediately rule out the possibility that the editor was occasionally inconsistent or less than rigorous.

What can be said with greater certainty, in any event, is that he goes out of his way to emphasize that even though the divine Christ may be worthy of equal honor to God (whatever that is taken to mean) he is decidedly subordinate to him as the Son of the Father. Christ's subordinate status is evident throughout the forged and interpolated letters. As examples, Christ is said to do all things "according to the will of the Father" (Eph. 3); he established all things "according to the will of the Father" (Eph. 18); Christ becomes "subject to" God ὃς καὶ μετὰ πάντων ὑποτάσσεται; Tars. 5); just as the church "depends on" Christ, Christ "depends on" God the Father (μακαρίζω τοὺς ἀνακεκραμένους αὐτῷ, ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ; Eph. 5); so too all in the church are to be obedient to the bishop as the bishop is to Christ and Christ is to the Father (Philad. 4). In Smyrneans 7 we are explicitly told that Jesus Christ

“rejoiced in the superiority of the Father” (χαίρων τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπεροχῇ); in Smyrneans 9 Christ is subject to the Father just as those in the church are subject to their leaders and those lower in the church hierarchy are to those higher (οἱ λαϊκοὶ τοῖς διακόνοις ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, οἱ διάκονοι τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, ὁ ἐπίσκοπος τῷ Χριστῷ, ὡς αὐτὸς τῷ πατρί).

Along with his concern to clarify—as best he could, we might assume—the relationship between Christ and God the Father, the forger was determined to understand the humanity of Christ, who, as we have seen, is described as an ἄνθρωπος.. The most striking feature of the author’s view is that even though the Incarnate had a human body, he did not have a human soul. In its place was the Logos: “God the Word did dwell in a human body, being within it as the Word, even as the soul also is in the body, because it was God that inhabited it, and not a human soul” (Philad. 6).[59] Probably it was because of that that Christ, as a human, “could not be tempted” by the Devil in the wilderness (the author asks the Devil: πῶς πειράζεις τὸν ἀπείραστον; Philip. 11); and why he “lived a life of holiness without sin” (Smyrn. 1). After his life ended, it was the Word, which had previously indwelled him, that “raised up again His own temple on the third day” (Smyrn. 2).

The Author’s Polemical Target

As repeatedly noted, it has proved remarkably difficult over the years for scholars to nail down the object of the author’s polemic. On one hand, it is clear that he is opposed to all sorts of heterodoxy stemming from the second century —docetism, psilanthropism, Marcionism, Gnosticism, Sabellianism, and Ebionitism. It would be also fair to say, in general terms, that based on the parallels to the Job commentary, the author is almost certainly an “Arian” of some kind. But that term itself has fallen on hard times, for good reasons. Rowan Williams notes that it became more or less a term of disapprobation applied indiscriminately to anyone who did not subscribe to Nicene orthodoxy: “The anti-Nicene coalition did not see themselves as constituting a single ‘Arian’ body: it is the aim of works like Athanasius’ *De synodis* to persuade them that this is effectively what they are, all tarred with the same brush.”[60] Even such a die-hard dyohypostatic as Eusebius of Caesarea could in effect deny that he was Arian.[61] It is striking that in his theological writings *Contra marcellum* and *De ecclesiastica theologia*, Eusebius never uses either the term *Arian* or the name *Arius*; so too other harsh opponents of miahypostatics such as Eusebius of

Emesa and Cyril of Jerusalem.[62]

Moreover—the point I stressed earlier—even though the author's Job Commentary comes out strongly for a neo-Arian position that appears close to those taken by an Aetius or Eunomius, this does not mean that this set of writings will as well. We know nothing about the life story of Julian of Antioch, whether he remained consistent in his Trinitarian views with the shifting of the doctrinal tides over the years, or whether he wrote these two works in close proximity to one another. It is hard to believe that a theologian such as Julian, who insisted on the absolute supremacy of God the Father, and the subordination of the Son, would be willing to say that the two were ὁμοτίμους. At the same time, that is the claim of Pseudo-Ignatius himself, even though he too stresses the superiority of the only unbegotten God and the subordination of his only begotten Son.

In any event, the counter arguments of Lightfoot that the author could as well be seen as a Nicene Christian fail to convince.[63] However one might decide to label the author positively, a number of his comments indeed appear to be coded statements of polemic, directed against a specific target. This target does not need to be identified with any person that we otherwise have knowledge of, any more than the author Julian need be someone mentioned in our other surviving records. What is reasonably clear is that a number of the author's nuanced statements show that he is combating a hyper-monotheistic, virulently anti-Arian, strict miahypostatic view such as that embraced by, and often accorded to, Marcellus of Ancyra (whether Marcellus himself was the actual target or not). This view was commonly labeled Sabellian by its enemies, because of its insistence that there was only one hypostasis, God the Father, and that only the Word (not the Son) was preexistent with the Father.

According to Marcellus, the Word emerged from the Father for the purpose of creation and later, then, became flesh at the incarnation. It was when it took on flesh that the Word became the Son; indeed none of the traditional Christological titles, apart from Word, apply to the Preincarnate. At the end of all things, when the time is fulfilled, the Word will return into the Father, at which point the kingdom of the Christ will come to an end.[64]

The opponent of these views—Julian of Antioch, forger of the Pseudo-Ignatian letters—was some kind of "Arian,"[65] who is most clearly seen in what he attacks, either explicitly or with subtlety. It is hard to know why he does not take the hard neo-Arian views expressed in the Job Commentary. Is it because he is pretending to be Ignatius? Because his views are slightly different at this point of his life and authorship? Because he is more intent on opposing an aberrant

view than setting forth the niceties of his own? In any event, his "Eusebian"-type opposition to a Marcellian miahypostatic view is relatively pronounced throughout this forged response in the name of Ignatius.[66]

And so, for example, Antiochenes 1 attacks those who "deny Christ under pretense of maintaining the unity of God"—the latter being one of the ultimate concerns of miahypostatic views. Philippians 4 insists that not only is there one God the Father, there is also one Son, God the Word. Repeatedly, throughout Julian, the forger's, writings, Christ is portrayed as a separate being from God. Christ, moreover, is the "Son" (not just the Word) "before the ages" (Antioch. 14); Christ (not just the Word) is begotten by the Father before the ages (Magn. 11); Christ is the Son of God before time (Polyc. 3). Magnesians 6 strongly asserts an anti-Marcellian position: Jesus Christ was begotten before the ages and was not only God the Word but the only begotten Son, and he "remains the same forever" and "of his kingdom there will be no end"—the most strident and frequent position taken by opponents against Marcellus.

An even more direct assault on Marcellus is found in the edited version of Magnesians 8, as long ago recognized by Lightfoot. The authentic letter spoke of "Jesus Christ His Son, who is his word proceeding from silence."[67] The interpolator significantly altered the passage with important theological result, so that now it reads, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν αὐτοῦ λόγος, οὐ ῥητός, ἀλλ' οὐσιώδης· οὐ γάρ ἐστιν λαλιᾶς ἐνάρθρου φώνημα, ἀλλ' ἐνεργείας θεϊκῆς οὐσία γεννητή:

> through Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Word, not a literal utterance but having a real existence; for he is not a speaking of an articulate utterance [meaning that he is not just words that can be aurally sensed] but is a being begotten of divine power [that is, he has a real existence as an ousia, but is begotten as such by God].[68]

Lightfoot argues that this statement opposed the Marcellian view that Christ did not have a separate ousia from the Father but was an energy emitted by the Father for the purposes of creation and redemption, who then was absorbed back into the Father when these tasks were completed.[69] Moreover, it stresses, contrary to Marcellus, that the Preincarnate was not Word in name only, a Word that was inside the Father until spoken and not the Son (until the incarnation).[70]

For this author not only is the divine Christ a distinctive being, begotten before the ages, he is subordinate to God, contrary to the views of Marcellus and others more or less in the Athanasian camp or to the left of it. Hence the stress

we have seen already: Christ does the will of the Father, he does nothing apart from the Father (Magn. 7); he is subject to the Father, dependent on the Father, obedient to the Father (Eph. 5; Philad. 4; Smyrn. 7, 9). This is a subordinationist Christology. It makes sense, then, that the author portrays his opponent(s) in contrary, Sabellian terms. Thus, as we have seen Satan (the author of the heresy held by the opponent) is attacked in Philippians 7 for maintaining that Christ himself is God over all. So too Marcellus and his followers were often accused of being Sabellian, since they were so miahypostatic that they (seemed to have) denied the Son a separate existence. It bears noting that in his *De ecclesiastica theologia* Eusebius accused Marcellus of being Sabellian on forty occasions; moreover, a number of later anti-miahypostatic tractates—including Pseudo-Athanasius' *Fourth Oration against the Arians* and Basil of Caesarea's *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos*—attacked Marcellus and his followers under the thinly disguised figure of Sabellius.[71] Finally, it should be noted that Eusebius explicitly maligned Marcellus for his view that Christ had a specifically human soul (*De eccl. theol*. 1.20.43, 45); the author of the Pseudo-Ignatians is emphatic that the incarnate Christ had a human body and the divine Logos in the place of a human soul, a view that has been wrongly read as Apollinarian, but is in any event clearly anti-Marcellian.[72]

Some Remaining Ambiguities

It would not be prudent to claim to have ascertained the precise theological position of the author of the Pseudo-Ignatian corpus, when so many stalwarts in the field have failed. What is relatively clear is that the author Julian has here used the proto-orthodox martyr-bishop Ignatius to oppose an Über-Nicene view such as found in Marcellus and those like him, who stressed the complete unity of God at the expense (it was thought) of the separate existence of the Son. This miahypostatic position is roundly attacked in the polemics of the corpus through its emphasis on the preexistence of the Son (not just the Word), his separate existence from God, and especially his subordination to God. All of this could simply be called Origenist, but that does not get us very far, as so many theological views of the fourth century could trace their lineage—had they wanted to do so—to the great Alexandrian.

Even though Julian himself appears to have been neo-Arian in his Commentary on Job, the views in the Ignatian forgeries (and interpolations) are more muted, and ambiguities remain. When the author stresses that there is only one God, not two or three (Philip. 2), that may simply be a defense against the

charge of ditheism or tritheism, but it could also be an attack on those who, like Origen, had no qualms about calling Christ a "second God"—a view acceptable as well to a range of Arians. The "Eusebian" dyohypostatic view stressed that although there were two hypostases, they were not equal; Eusebius, in fact, makes the emphatic declaration that δύο ὑποστάσεις τιθέντα. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἰσοτίμους αὐτὰς ὁριζόμεθα (*De eccl. theol*. 2.7.3). That seems difficult to reconcile with the claim of Pseudo-Ignatius that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are, precisely, εἰς τρεῖς ὁμοτίμους (Philip. 2). Are the three ὁμοτίμους but not ἰσοτίμους? Moreover, when the author claims that the opponents "alienate Christ from the Father" (Trall. 6) is that an attack on neo-Arians? And does the claim that Christ is "unchangeable in nature" (Philip. 5) stand counter to a neo-Arian view, as Perler maintains?[73]

In sum, while a good deal remains ambiguous, several points seem clear. In view of linguistic considerations, the author of the Pseudo-Ignatians appears to be Julian of Antioch, who also produced the Apostolic Constitutions and the Commentary on Job. In the latter he takes a strong neo-Arian stand. In the Pseudo-Ignatians, for one reason or another (written for a different purpose? At a different time in his life, when his views were somewhat altered?) the line he takes is somewhat more moderate, comparable to a traditional Eusebian dyohypostatic perspective. But there is little doubt about his principal theological opponent—whether a real figure or a person or group imagined for the occasion. He attacks in particular an extreme Nicene perspective that emphasized the unity of God, the one hypostasis, at the expense, in the author's opinion, of the individual existence of Christ and his subordination to the Father.

Other Emphases of the Author

Throughout this study I have stressed that forgeries—like other literary works—need to be seen as multifunctional, and this is certainly the case with the Pseudo-Ignatians. The author was not concerned simply to attack false theological teachings. He had a wide range of interests, as is evident from even a casual perusal of his work. Among other things he devoted a considerable amount of effort to expanding the paranetic sections of the authentic Ignatian letters (see e.g., Philad. 4) and in providing paranesis of his own (e.g., Antioch. 9–10). In that regard he was interested in the social arrangements of the Christians in their family lives (the Haustafeln in the chapters just mentioned); in ethical instructions against crimes such as magic, pederasty, and murder (Antioch. 11); and against fanatically rigorous asceticism (Hero 1). He was particularly

concerned to develop Ignatius' own stress on the church hierarchy (e.g., Eph. 5). The bishop is to be followed as the head of the church (Hero 3, Tars. 8, Trall. 7, Smyrn. 9, and lots of other places). The author was especially keen to stress—in an elaboration on a theme of the Pastoral epistles, as N. Brox has recognized[74]—the validity of young bishops (Magn. 3 and both letters in the correspondence with Mary).

In addition, he had other polemical targets, not just the dubious theologians he saw as the primary threat. In particular, he was concerned with Jews and/or Judaizers who, in this case, were not necessarily ciphers for his overly emphatic miahypostatic opponents.[75] And so, he explicitly attacks the "Christ killing Jews" (Magn. 11; Philad. 6) and indicates that Jews both do battle with God and "killed the Lord" (Trall. 11). Christ stands over against "the Jews," his enemies: "The Word raised up again His own temple on the third day, when it had been destroyed by the Jews fighting against Christ." For him, Judaism no longer served a useful (or any) function, and had legitimately passed away: "It is absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue, and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end" (Magn. 10). For that reason, Jewish festivals were no longer to be kept: "Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness" (Magn. 9). In fact, anyone who keeps Sabbath "is a Christ killer" (Philip. 13); so too is anyone who celebrates the Passover with the Jews. This final attack may be directed against Quartodecimans; but given the propensity of some Christians in some places to celebrate Jewish holidays with Jews—famously acknowledged and attacked by other stalwart fourth-century proponents of Christian orthodoxy such as John Chrysostom[76]—the author may indeed have in mind otherwise orthodox Christians celebrating real festivals with real Jewish friends and neighbors.

1. See pp. 362–66.

2. F. C. Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity* (London: John Murray, 1904), ch. 1.

3. Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ch. 1.

4. Judah Segal, *Edessa, the "Blessed City*" pp. 68–69.

5. See e.g., J. J. Gunther, "The Meaning and Origin of the Name, 'Judas Thomas,'" *Mus* 93 (1980): 113–48. On the whole question, see Sebastian Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in Attridge and Hata, eds., *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, pp. 212–34; and Alexander Mirkovic, *Prelude to Constantine*. Mirkovic's concern, however, is not with the origin of the legend but with its function in the early centuries of circulation.

6. Most thoroughly in H. J. W. Drijvers, "Addai und Mani: Christentum und

Manichäismus im dritten Jahrhundert in Syrien," *OrChrAn* 221 (1983): 171–85; recapitulated in "The Abgar Legend," in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1.492–99. See also "Facts and Problems in Early Syriac Speaking Christianity," *SecCent* 2 (1982): 157–75.

7. "Die Abgar-Sage ist wahrscheinlich am Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts in Edessa entstanden als eine Propagandaschrift der damaligen Orthodoxie"; "Addai und Mani," p. 172.

8. See pp. 364–66.

9. Translation from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*. In the later *Doctrina Addai*, Jesus' reply is delivered orally rather than in writing. It is usually thought that this is a change from the older version of the story, influenced by the view that Jesus was known not to have written anything (so Augustine, *Contra Faust*. 28.4; Jerome, *In Ezek*. 44. 29; Gelasian Decree 5.8.1.2).

10. Quotation from M. 556, I, ed. F. W. K. Muller, *APAW* (1904): 87, as cited by Drijvers, "Facts and Problems," p. 163, n. 24.

11. "Es stellt sich also heraus, dass der Antwortbrief Jesu an Abgar eine pointierte Version des Para-kletspruches ist, die vielleicht gegen den manichäischen Ansprüchen und der manichäischen Mission gemeint ist"; "Addai und Mani," p. 180.

12. Drijvers also suggests that the allusion to John 20:29 at the outset may have been picked up from the Manichaean literature, as the Manichaeans may have used it to explain why the eyewitnesses got it wrong and only the later Mani got it right; "Addai und Mani," p. 181.

13. Ibid., p. 181.

14. Drijvers' view that it was the last line of the letter ("your city will be blessed and the enemy will no longer prevail over it") that led to a separate transmission history of the letters, apart from the stories, fails to convince. Why would the line not, then, be found in Eusebius, if he knew both the letters and the legend? It is easier to believe that the correspondence originally had a transmission history of its own and that the final line was added in some witnesses but not others.

15. "Abgar Legend," p. 495. Emphasis his.

16. "Facts and Problems," p. 161.

17. Interestingly, in the Manichaean legend, Mani's "heavenly twin clothes him with miraculous healing power and charges him to proclaim the message of the truth." This is, in the Addai Legend, "exactly the same task for which Judas Thomas sends Addai to Edessa." It is, then, a later feature of the legend, as the

letters originally indicated that it would be Jesus who sent an apostle, not his twin. Moreover, in the *Doctrina Addai*, the portrait of Jesus painted by Hanan appears to stand in the place of the venerated portrait of Mani. “Facts and Problems,” p. 165–66.

8. “The Abgar Legend,” p. 496.

9. On the problem presented now by the term *Arian*, see below, pp. 474–75.

0. Charles Bigg, “The Clementine Homilies,” in *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 192.

1. *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2006), p. 15.

2. Prologue to the *Recognitions*; translation of Thomas Smith in *ANF*, vol. 8.

3. *Knowledge and Religious Authority*, p. 28.

4. Ibid., pp. 206–7.

5. See the fascinating historical survey of J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp* (London: Macmillan, 1889–90, reprinted Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1989); part 2, vol. 1, *Ignatius and Polycarp*; pp. 237–46.

6. *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 235.

7. Quoted in ibid., p. 237.

8. For the following two paragraphs I depend on my discussion in *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1. 210–11.

9. *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae* (Oxford: Lichfield, 1644).

0. *Epistolae genuinae S. Ignatii martyris* (Amsterdam: Blaev, 1646).

1. *Acta primorum martyrum sincere et selecta* (Paris: Muget, 1689).

2. William Cureton, *The Ancient Syriac Version of Saint Ignatius* (London: Rivington, 1845).

3. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*. Theodore Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien* (Gotha: Perthes, 1873).

4. Weijenborg, *Les lettres d'Ignace*; Joly, *Dossier;* Rius-Camps, *The Four Authentic Letters;* Hübner, “Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung”; Thomas Lechner, *Ignatius adversus Valentinianos*.

5. See further p. 6, n. 7.

6. Lightfoot, p. 248; much of Zahn’s argument is recapitulated in Arnold Amelungk, “Untersuchung über Pseudo-Ignatius,” *ZWT* 42 (1899): 508–81.

7. “eigentlich ein Plagiat von dem [Brief] an Polycarp.” Amelungk, “Untersuchung,” p. 553.

8. Jack W. Hannah, “The Setting of the Ignatian Long Recension,” *JBL* 79 (1960): 222.

9. Milton P. Brown, “Notes on the Language and Style of Pseudo-Ignatius,” *JBL* 83 (1964): 146–52.

0. Translations are taken from A. Cleveland Coxe in *ANF*.

1. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 258.

2. See, for example, A. Harnack, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel*, pp. 241–68; and C. H. Turner, “Notes on the Apostolic Constitutions I–III,” *JTS* 16 (1914–15): 54–61, 523–38; 31 (1930): 128–41.

3. Dieter Hagedorn, *Der Hiobkommentar*.

4. “Un commentaire grec arien sur Job,” *RHE* 20 (1924): 38–65.

5. For early views, and an explicit discussion and refutation of Funk’s claim that the author was Apollinarian, see Amelungk, “Untersuchungen.” For Eusebius of Emesa: Othmar Perler, “Pseudo-Ignatius und Eusebius von Emesa,” *Historisches Jahrbuch* 77 (1958), 73–82; Evagrius Ponticus (completely unconvincingly): Reinoud Weijenborg,” Is Evagrius Ponticus the Author of the Longer Recension of the Ignatian Letters?” *Anton* 44 (1969): 339–47; Euzoius or associate: James D. Smith, III, “Reflections on Euzoius in Alexandria and Antioch,” *StPatr* 36 (2001): 514–20.

6. *Hiobkommentar*, xli.

7. On the problems involved with using the term *Arian*, see esp. Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Thinking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 2–4, 13–14. See further pp. 474–75 below.

8. *Hiobkommentar*, xlii–xlviii.

9. Ibid., xlix.

0. “Die einzige mögliche Erklärung für die sachlichen und sprachlich-stilistischen Parallelen zwischen allen drei Werken ist die Identität ihres Autors.” Ibid., lii.

1. Translation mine, based on the Greek text in Hagedorn, *Hiobkommentar*, pp. 245–46.

2. His argument: Julian uses the Lucianic revision of the Septuagint, he cites the exegesis of Lucian of Antioch, he discusses alternative interpretations of “the Syrians,” and Antioch was a stronghold of Arianism.

3. See, e.g., Joseph Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1999), ch. 4.

4. This is why it is important to look at a range of issues, not simply theological

content, when evaluating the authorial claims of such works as the Pastoral epistles or Colossians and Ephesians.

5. On the problems of using terms connected with “Arian,” see pp. 474–75.

6. See, e.g., Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, pp. 210–40.

7. See, for example, Norbert Brox, “Pseudo-Paulus und Pseudo-Ignatius: einige Topoi altchristlicher Pseudepigraphie,” *VC* 30 (1976): 181–88, who deals with a very limited aspect of the problem posed by the Pseudo-Ignatians, arguing that the author modeled his work on Pastorals, especially (though somewhat obviously) in his correspondence with Mary.

8. All quotations of the long recension of Ignatius are taken from Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *ANF*, vol. 1.

9. This was obviously a key passage for Funk’s identification of the author as an Apollinarian; see, though, note 65 below.

0. *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 166. See also note 47 above.

1. See especially Lienhard, *Marcellus*, p. 108.

2. Ibid., p. 194. It is interesting to consider the First Creed of the Dedication at the Council of Antioch, whose “Arian” bishops rejected the label Arian: “We have not been followers of Arius. For how could we, as bishops, follow a presbyter? Nor did we receive any other faith except the one handed down from the beginning. We ourselves were the examiners and testers of his [Arius’s] faith. We admitted him; we did not follow him.” Quoted in ibid., p. 168.

3. For example, Lightfoot argues that the author speaks of the Son as “begotten before the Ages.” But he admits that most Arians would have no trouble saying that as well. He indicates that the author condemns those who see Christ as a mere man as well as those who deny that he is God; that too could be and was part of Arian polemic. And he points out that the author calls Christ “God”—but so too do Arians. Lightfoot also maintains that Arians would not consider Christ “unchangeable” by nature (on the basis of a passage in the Thalia); but Perler has argued that whereas extreme Arians may not have made the claim, those like Eusebius of Caesarea easily could have done so (Othmar Perler, “Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochian: Frage der Echtheit—neue, arabische Übersetzung,” *FZPhTh* 18, 1971, 381–96). At the end of the day, the author simply uses too much “Arian” language to be dismissed.

4. For the fullest and best synthesis of Marcellus’s life and theology, see Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum;* in addition see Ayres, *Niceae*, pp. 62–69.

5. That he was not a Nicene of Apollinarian leanings was shown long ago, especially in Amelungk’s refutation of Funk, “Untersuchung”; his conclusion

stands close to the position staked out here; pp. 521–22. What he does not realize is that the subtle views are set up by the smokescreen. See also Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part 2, vol. 1, pp. 254–61.

6. Others who have seen the author as an Arian of a more-or-less-Eusebian mode include Perler, "Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochian," pp. 381–96, with Perler earlier making a more specific proposal, in "Pseudo-Ignatius"; and K. J. Woollcombe, "The Doctrinal Connexions of the Pseudo-Ignatian Letters," *StPatr* 6 (1962): 269–73. Amelungk has helpfully deduced a large number of parallels between the Pseudo-Ignatians and the Ekthesis makrostichos in particular, possibly a source for Julian's work; see the tabular results in Amelungk, "Untersuchungen," pp. 573–81.

7. On the famous textual problem, where scribes nervous about the claim being taken in a Gnostic way added a negative, so that now the Word does *not* come forth from "Sige," see Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part 2, vol. 2, pp. 126–28.

8. Translation mine.

9. *Apostolic Fathers*, part 2, vol. 1, p. 268.

0. On Marcellus's views, see Lienhard *Marcellus*, p. 218.

1. See ibid., pp. 210–40.

2. Apollinarius saw the Logos as taking the place of the νοῦς or πνεῦμα, not the ψύχη, though the matter came to be complicated in later Apollinarians. Other aspects of the author's teaching, however, seem to distance him from Apollinarius. See further Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part 2, vol. 1, pp. 271–73, and note 65 above.

3. "Pseudo-Ignatius und Eusebius von Emesa," pp. 80–81.

4. N. Brox, "Pseudo-Paulus."

5. On the use of "the Jew" as a convenient label against fellow Christians in fourth-century controversies, see, e.g., Christine Shepardson, *Anti-Judaism and Christian Orthodoxy: Ephrem's Hymns in Fourth Century Syria* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

6. See for example Robert Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Fourth Century* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Apologetic Forgeries

In the preceding chapters I have focused on Christian forgeries that attack views thought to be problematic or dangerous—the standard province of polemics. The obverse of the battle coin is apologia, the defense put up against the attacks of others.[1] Early Christian forgeries were used in the intellectual defense of the faith against non-Christian opponents, and it is that apologetic function of forged writings that I will consider in this chapter.[2]

Several of the forgeries I have already discussed may well have functioned, in one sense or another, apologetically.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Acts of the Apostles, a non-pseudepigraphic forgery that strives, among other things, to champion Paul, his message, and his mission, has often been read as an apology of sorts, not just for Paul (and Jesus) but for the Christian movement as a whole.[3] To some extent, though not completely, this apologetic thrust hinges on the identification of Theophilus. If he is thought of as a Roman official of some kind—whether an actual figure or one dreamt up for the occasion—it would make sense that the history of the Christian church that follows would be oriented toward convincing him that the movement comes from God, that there is nothing illegal or immoral about it, that its success is evidence of its truth claims, and that any social conflict that has erupted with its appearance is due not to rabble-rousers among the Christians but to the recalcitrant Jews who have rejected not only God but also his messiah and the people who follow him. This bilateral approach that sets its apologetic sights on both pagans, to whom apology is made, and Jews, who are faulted and condemned in the process, became a regular feature of the early Christian apologetic literature, for reasons that are not hard to fathom. For Christian thinkers intent on establishing the legitimacy of the religion as ancient only one real option was available: to present the Christian faith as the “true” form of Judaism, a religion that could be traced as far back as Moses—who lived four centuries before the pagan Homer—and beyond him all the way to Abraham. In a world that respected antiquity and suspected novelty, Judaism was a religion with venerable roots, and Christians needed to claim them as their own. It was a

claim hard to sustain, given the thriving communities of non-Christian Jews, far outnumbering the followers of Jesus, legitimately able to claim themselves to be "true" Jews. They, unlike most Christians, actually followed Jewish laws and traditions. And if they were the Jews, what were the Christians but a set of interlopers who tried to usurp Israel's rightful place as the people of the one Creator God? As a matter of survival, then, Christian apologists had to attack contemporary Judaism as an aberrant form of the faith that descended from Abraham and Moses.

This is one of the factors that led to the early animosities between Jews and Christians, and it played itself out narratively not just in the minds of Christians but also on the written page, in a book such as Acts which portrays the Jews in a negative light, blaming them for the Christians' woes and portraying them as troublemakers who have refused to accept the true prophet and messiah sent from their own God. The persecution of Christians in this book does not usually originate with Roman mobs or officials incensed at the claims made for Jesus. It almost always originates with Jews, who have rejected their own messiah.[4] Thus the apologetic function of the book depends in part on its castigation of Jews and the true religion that they belligerently refuse to embrace.

And so the book absolves Christians—especially the apostles, and in particular Paul—of any wrongdoing. The apologetic *Tendenz* is seen especially in the speeches delivered to pagan officials in the book, speeches that dominate the final quarter of the narrative in the episodes of Paul on trial. These speeches are not historical recollections; they are apologetic models for Christian readers who also needed to defend themselves against charges that the author considered unfair and unjustified. The Christians have done nothing to rouse the ire of the state; they are simply following the true understanding of the Jewish faith made available now with the coming of the messiah. Any social unrest that accompanies the movement originates with the wicked machinations of unbelieving Jews.

We will see this correlation of antagonism to Jews and apology to gentiles in such works as the Acts of Pilate, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, and the Sibylline Oracles. In the case of the Acts of the Apostles, the intertwined themes are connected to the identity of the pseudonymous author. He is not simply someone who is basing his work on hearsay. He has done substantial research into the matter (Luke 1:1–4), and more than that, he was personally there to see how the principal figure in his narrative—the apostle Paul himself—engendered unwarranted hatred by the Jews, leading to his arrest and trials, where he delivered his apologetic addresses. The alleged author, then, is well situated to

show that the followers of Jesus are no threat to the social order.

FIRST PETER

Another forgery that is both closely connected with Paul and related to issues of apologia is the letter of 1 Peter.[5] Unlike Acts, 1 Peter is not principally framed to convey an apologetic message; it instead gives instructions for Christians confronted with animosity and opposition, urging them to behave in ways that reveal their innocence in the face of charges—unofficial, in this case—brought against them: “Be prepared at all times to provide an apologia to everyone who asks you for a word concerning the hope that is in you” (3:15). As noted earlier, the book is especially obsessed with the issue of Christian persecution and suffering. The author is particularly concerned that Christians suffer only for doing what is right, not what is wrong (3:17). Suffering “as a Christian” is to be expected, since Christ himself had to suffer (3:18). But his followers should suffer for their faith, not because they have done anything to incur legitimate animosity: “For what credit is there if you sin and suffer for it, but endure it? But if you do what is good and suffer, and endure it, this is acceptable to God” (2:20). Christians are to lead moral and upright lives, in no small measure because doing so may pay the ultimate apologetic reward of leading others to join the faith: “Abstain from the fleshly passions which do battle against your soul; keep your conduct good among the gentiles, so that when they malign you as evil doers they may see your good works and give glory to God on the day of visitation” (2:11–12).

The Christians’ behavior should not merely be acceptable to outsiders, it should be exemplary. They should “no longer live according to human passions but according to the will of God” (4:2). In this they display a newness of life that should attract the right kind of attention:

> The time that is already past is sufficient to fulfill the will of the gentiles, participating in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, drinking parties, and lawless idolatries. They are surprised when you do not run around with them in the same wild profligacy, and they blaspheme—but they will render an account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (4:3–4).

In addition, Christians are to subject themselves to every civil authority (2:13–14), “for it is the will of God that by doing good you might silence the ignorance

of the foolish” (2:15). On the home front, Christians are to follow established lines of authority. Slaves are to obey masters (2:18) and women are to be submissive to husbands, “so that if some are disobedient to the word, they might be gained through the behavior of their wives without them saying a word” (3:1). In short, believers are to be model citizens, slaves, and spouses; they should not break the law or acceptable moral codes (4:15); but if they suffer “as a Christian” that is all to the good, as in the long run it may have a positive effect, for both sufferer and oppressor (3:16–17).

This exhortation to speak and live apologetically is given by one of early Christianity’s ultimate authorities, the apostle Peter, “witness to Christ’s sufferings,” who himself, of course, was reputed to have suffered the ultimate penalty, in having been martyred under Nero in Rome. The letter, though, was not actually written by Peter from beyond the grave, but by a forger who was intent on using Peter’s name to provide authorization for the message he needed to deliver.

THE ACTS OF PILATE

As a final example of a previously examined forgery that functioned apologetically, we should consider anew the fourth-century Acts of Pilate.[6] As already indicated, the genesis of the book has generated considerable interest among scholars, in no small measure because of the intriguing circumstance mentioned by Eusebius, that earlier in the fourth century, during the reign of Maximin Daia, a pagan version of an “Acts of Pilate” appeared and made an enormous splash among readers throughout the Empire.

Although this pagan Acts of Pilate does not survive, the Christian version does. In this imaginative account, as we have seen, rather than condemning Jesus justly for warrantable crimes, Pilate finds Jesus completely innocent of all charges. It is only the recalcitrant Jews who force his hand. Pilate himself is convinced that Jesus is the true King. So too is everyone else in the narrative, apart from the Jewish antagonists. Even the standards bearing the image of Caesar bow down, of their own accord, before him. Caesar himself, then, recognizes not just Jesus’ complete innocence but his divine royalty.

This in itself is an apologetic motif, but in many ways it is the very existence of this Christian version of an Acts of Pilate that functions as an apology. This appears to be a case of counterforgery, a forged Christian Acts countering an earlier forged pagan Acts. To that extent, the book is the apologetic equivalent to the polemical letter of the Laodiceans, whose very existence shows that the

Marcionite forgery could not really be by Paul. With the Acts of Pilate, the Christian edition discredits and refutes the pagan account simply by giving the "true" version of the story. To do so it had no need to refer explicitly to the earlier work. Its appearance and dissemination themselves corrected the errant portrayal of the older forgery.

In addition to these forgeries that we have already considered under other rubrics, there are several whose primary function may well be considered apologetic, including one that was, in many ways, more historically and culturally significant than many of the books that eventually became Scripture, the Protevangelium Jacobi.

THE PROTEVANGELIUM JACOBI

The title, Protevangelium Jacobi, is not original or even ancient. It comes from the first publication of the book by G. Postel in 1552, *Protevangelion sive de natalibus Jesu Christi et ipsius Matris virginis Mariae, sermo historicus divi Jacobi minoris*.[7] The title is appropriate to the book's contents, as the narrative relates events leading up to and immediately following the birth of Jesus, especially those involving Mary: her own miraculous birth, upbringing, young life, and engagement to Joseph. In addition, the account narrates, as a kind of Christian midrash on the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke,[8] the circumstances of Jesus' birth, Mary's continued virginity (demonstrated famously by a midwife's postpartum inspection), and the opposition to the Christ child by King Herod, leading to the miraculous protection of John the Baptist and his mother, while his father, Zacharias, the high priest of the Jews, is murdered in the Temple. The book is allegedly written by "James," by whom is certainly meant the brother of Jesus, or for this account, his stepbrother, the son of Joseph from a previous marriage.

The account is usually dated to the second century, for reasons we will see below, and became particularly popular in eastern Christendom.[9] It was not unknown in the West: there are still fragments of a Latin version and, more important, it was taken over by the widely read Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, which popularized many of its stories. But for the most part the Protevangelium was not transmitted in the West because its portrayal of Jesus' brothers as sons of Joseph from a previous marriage was roundly condemned by no less an authority than Jerome, in whose forcefully stated view Jesus' alleged brothers were in fact his cousins.[10] This interpretation was closely tied to Jerome's ascetic agenda; for him, not only was Mary a perpetual virgin, but so too was Joseph, the earthly

father of the Lord. The Protevangelium was explicitly condemned in 405 CE by Pope Innocent I[11] and eventually in the sixth-century Gelasian Decree.

The earliest reference that is virtually certain comes in Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17 (on Matt. 13:55), where he claims that the view that James was the son of Joseph from a previous marriage is taught either in the Gospel of Peter or the Book of James, the latter of which, he says, stresses the ongoing virginity of Mary. As this is a key theme of the Protevangelium, there is little doubt that Origen is referring to our text. More questionable are possible references in Clement of Alexandria, who knows the story of Mary's postpartum inspection by a midwife, but does not indicate the source of his knowledge *(Strom. 7*. 16. 93), and earlier in Justin, who knows the tradition that Jesus was born in a cave outside Bethlehem, but does not refer to the Protevangelium itself (*Dial*. 78).

Whenever the Protevangelium achieved its final form (if one can speak of a "final" form for a textual tradition as malleable as this one),[12] the text as it has come down to us gives clear signs of being based on yet earlier sources available to the pseudonymous author. Not only is chapter 18 narrated in the first person (Joseph describing how "time stood still" when the son of God came into the world), so too is the postscript: "I James, the one who has written this account" (ch. 25). Obviously, the first person of chapter 25 is different from the first person of chapter 18; the two accounts almost certainly come from different sources, or at least from one later redaction of another source. Harnack made the influential argument that there are three major sources that have been incorporated into the longer account: (1) a kind of biography of Mary in chapters 1–17, beginning with the circumstances of her miraculous birth to the wealthy Jerusalemite Joachim and his hitherto barren wife, Anna, and through her holy and protected infancy, to her upbringing in the Jerusalem Temple, where she is daily fed by an angel, through her engagement to the elderly Joseph, and then her virginal conception; (2) an account of Joseph and the birth of Jesus in chapters 18–20, including the trip to Bethlehem, the firsthand account of Joseph's vision of time standing still, and the narrative of the postpartum inspection of Mary, which showed her to be a virgin even after giving birth; and (3) an account of the death of Zacharaias, the father of John the Baptist, in the wake of Herod's wrath, in chapters 22–24.[13]

Other scholars, such as de Strycker, have argued for an original unity of the text, largely on the grounds of literary style and vocabulary.[14] What is clear, in any event, is that the subject matter does shift in the final chapters of the book, where Mary, the key figure of the narrative as a whole, disappears from sight,

and the family of John the Baptist assumes center stage. Even if this latter account was "original" to the text, it probably comes from a different oral or written source, as did the vision of Joseph in chapter 18.

Whatever his sources, it is not difficult to reconstruct some of the driving forces that led the pseudonymous author to generate his account. The canonical Gospels are notoriously silent about key issues and events involving the time up to and including Jesus' appearance into the world. This Gospel tries to fill in some of the gaps. It would be a mistake, however, to see the Protevangelium driven by biographical concerns pure and simple, or even by the impulse to provide an encomium on Mary, as such scholars as Hock have maintained.[15] The narrative does indeed function in both of these ways. But it also functions apologetically, to answer charges leveled against Jesus by non-Christian authors who were opposed both to him and to the religion founded in his name. It answers these charges pseudonymously, in a forgery allegedly written by Jesus' own (step)brother, James, who would obviously be well positioned to know the family secrets about events leading up to Jesus' appearance in the world.

The Pseudepigraphic Framework

There can be little doubt that by using the pseudonym "James" the author meant for his readers to identify him as Jesus' brother, the leader of the church in the Jewish capital, James of Jerusalem. Not only does he not identify himself further, so that readers naturally assume it must be "that" James, but at the end he associates himself with the holy city (cf. Gal. 2:9):

> But I James, the one who has written this account in Jerusalem, hid myself away in the wilderness when there was a disturbance at the death of Herod, until the disturbance in Jerusalem came to an end. There I glorified God, the Master, who gave me the wisdom to write this account. (ch. 25)[16]

This Herod, then, is "Herod the Great," known to be violently opposed to the family of Joseph (Matthew 2). But it is also possible that the author is making an implausible intertextual connection, or that he is himself somewhat confused about the facts of biblical history, by referring to the association of "James" and "Herod" from Acts 12:1–2. In the latter episode, it is another James (the son of Zebedee) who is persecuted, and by one of the other Herods (Antipas), who had him executed. According to the Protevangelium, James escaped the persecution,

which in any event happened after Herod's death; but possibly the author meant the passage to provide a foreshadowing of persecution yet to come (another James, another Herod). History knows of no connection between James of Jerusalem and Herod Antipas, but one should not object that this text, of all texts, could be expected to get the historical record straight.

In any event, in the Protevangelium, Joseph is said to have grown sons already when he is chosen to be Mary's husband (9.2); of these one is named Samuel (17.2). The James writing the book is obviously another son, and so an impeccable authority for events involving his "brother."[17] As H. Smid points out, the fact that he claims to be writing after the persecution of Herod had died down is meant to indicate that the book was produced very soon after the events described, while Jesus was still a child.

The Apologetic Character of the Text

The Protevangelium is widely thought to have as one of its purposes the "defense" of Mary against the attacks of pagan critics such as Celsus.[18] Mary Foskett claims that this view is held by the "majority of interpreters," although she herself prefers Hock's position that the book is meant as an encomium, not an apologia.[19] It is not clear, however, that these generic options are to be imagined as mutually exclusive. Encomia, among other things, can perform apologetic functions, and no one thinks that the narrative is in the *form* of an apologia.

The narrative may not be a direct response to Celsus' *Ἀληθὴς Λόγος,* but if not, it is a response to an attack on Mary and Jesus that was remarkably close to it in tenor and content. Celsus' attempt to disprove that Jesus could be a true son of God is worth quoting at length. The charges are placed on the lips of an antagonistic Jew:

> After this he represents the Jew as having a conversation with Jesus himself and refuting him on many charges as he thinks: first because he fabricated the story of his birth from a virgin; and he reproaches him because he came from a Jewish village and from a poor country woman who earned her living by spinning. He says that she was driven out by her husband, who was a carpenter by trade, as she was convicted of adultery. Then he says that after she had been driven out by her husband and while she was wandering about in a disgraceful way she secretly gave birth to Jesus. And he says that because he was poor he hired

> himself out as a workman in Egypt, and there tried his hand at certain magical powers on which the Egyptians pride themselves. (1.28)
>
> … The mother of Jesus is described as having been turned out by the carpenter who was betrothed to her, as she had been convicted of adultery and had a child by a certain soldier named Panthera. (1.32)[20]

Then, in an attempt to attack the idea that Jesus was conceived by the Spirit of God:

> Then was the mother of Jesus beautiful? And because she was beautiful did God have sexual intercourse with her, although by nature He cannot love a corruptible body? It is not likely that God would have fallen in love with her since she was neither wealthy nor of royal birth; for nobody knew her, not even her neighbours. It is just ridicule also when he says: When she was hated by the carpenter and turned out, neither divine power nor the gift of persuasion saved her. (1.39)

Obviously a good deal of these attacks on Mary and Jesus could actually have been spoken by Jewish as well as pagan opponents; the story of Panthera is well known from Jewish sources.[21] What is striking for our purposes here is that virtually every objection raised by Celsus' Jew is answered by the narrative account of the Protevangelium, a correspondence too impressive to be written off as coincidental:

Did Jesus invent the story of his virgin birth? The narrative shows that Mary really was a virgin. In fact, Joseph was given a test that revealed he did not father Jesus, and Mary was given a virginity test to show that she conceived without ever having sex. They passed with flying colors, to the amazement of all who looked on. Moreover, the special nature of the birth was shown by the fact that time stood still when the savior appeared into the world, by the vision of glory at the cave that both Joseph and the midwife witnessed, and above all by the postpartum inspection of Mary by the doubting Salome. She was intact, even after giving birth.

Was Jesus born in a remote Jewish village? On the contrary, he was born near Bethlehem, famous as the home of King David; moreover, his birth occurred there because Joseph and Mary had traveled on order of the Roman emperor Augustus (17.1). Furthermore, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is specifically said to be a fulfillment of prophecy (21.2).

Was Jesus’ mother a simple country woman? In fact, her father Joachim was extremely wealthy (1.1); he appears to have lived in Jerusalem, the capital city, in close proximity to the Temple of God (7.2); and he was customarily allowed to offer his gifts to God first, before all other Israelites, showing his extraordinarily high status. Moreover, Mary would be highly revered “among all generations” 6.2); and the “entire house of Israel loved her” (7.3). In fact, “all the generations of earth” would bless her (12.1).

Did she earn her living by spinning? No, she did not need to earn a living. Early in life her needs were supplied by her fabulously wealthy father; then she was fed by an angel of God in the Temple (8.1); and then she was supported by a wealthy businessman, her espoused Joseph. When she did spin it was not to make money but in order to fulfill a sacred duty, as she was given the honor of spinning part of the curtain for the holy Temple of God (10.1–2).

Did she live a life of poverty? Quite the contrary, her father was extremely rich and her husband, Joseph, was a well-to-do man of business.

Was she a commoner (not of royal blood)? In fact, she came from a family that was inordinately wealthy and among the upper-tier aristocrats of the land. More than that, she enjoyed divine favor from the time of her birth through her upbringing in the Temple, where she was fed by an angel of God.

Was she completely unknown, even to her neighbors? No, actually, “all Israel” knew her, even when she was still a child. As she grew, she became a favorite of the aristocratic priests who were at the center of the religion.

Was her husband a lowly carpenter? On the contrary, he was a major building contractor (9.2).

Was she expelled from her house and divorced by her husband when he discovered that she was pregnant? In fact, he was dissuaded by an angel of the Lord from abandoning her, and he “watched over her,” (14.2) taking her into his home.

Was she (legally) convicted of committing adultery? No, she was tried on the charges of adultery and legally exonerated by a sacred test that showed she had never had sexual relations (chs. 15-16).

Was the real father of the child a soldier named Panthera? On the contrary, she conceived by the Word of God, the living God, and the power of God (11.2–3).

Was Jesus then an illegitimate child? In fact, he was the literal son of God, destined to be “a great king to Israel” (20.3) and who was himself worthy of worship.

Did no one believe her story? On the contrary, everyone believed her, in no small measure because God revealed the truth in dreams and sacred tests to the satisfaction of all: Joseph, the Jewish priests, and the Jewish people.

It is true that there are other charges that Celsus levels against the infant Jesus—especially involving his "escape" to Egypt—that do not appear to be answered by the narrative of the Protevangelium. That may either be because of oversight, because the author simply chose not to respond to everything, because the ending of the narrative at some point became muddled or lost (when it shifts to the preservation of John from the wrath of Herod, rather than Jesus), or because it was not written directly to counter Celsus per se, but to counter the kinds of attacks that are now known from Celsus. In any event, it is quite clear from the point-by-point refutation that what we are dealing with here is a narrative that serves not only to entertain its readers with stories about Mary's life and the coming into the world of the infant Jesus, and not only to provide an encomium on the mother of the Son of God. It also is an account that serves to stave off the attacks on both Mary and Jesus by opponents of the faith, both pagan and Jewish.

Other Polemical Targets?

In view of the emphases of the Protevangelium, it can well be imagined that the author's apologetic agenda, directed to outsiders, found its complement in certain polemical motives related to intramural conflicts. For example, in addition to defending the character of Jesus' divine birth from attacks by opponents such as Celsus, the narrative could just as well function to debunk the views of adoptionists, such as the Ebionites from the Jewish side or the Theodotians from the gentile one, both of whom held that Jesus was naturally born of the union of Joseph and Mary and only acquired his divine sonship at his baptism.[22] In the Protevangelium, on the contrary, Jesus was miraculously conceived and miraculously born the Son of God—God's son from birth—born to one who was herself miraculously conceived, born, and raised to be a fit vessel for the Son of God.

One might imagine as well that the views of the Protevangelium may have been prompted by views expressed by Christian thinkers on the opposite end of the theological spectrum from the adoptionists, that is, docetists such as Marcion, who denied that Jesus appeared as a human being into the world as an infant at all, but that he descended in the appearance of a grown man during the

reign of Tiberius (Tertullian *Adv. Marc*. 4.7). Proto-orthodox writers accused Marcion of altering the Gospel of Luke to promote this view.[23] The forger of the Protevangelium takes the opposite side and approaches the matter from the opposite tack. Rather than truncating Luke (as Marcion is alleged to have done), this author expands it, precisely back into the period where Marcion refused to go, accepting as authoritative very "Jewish" traditions about Jesus' prehistory that Marcion, who opposed all things Jewish, would have found repugnant.[24]

It should not seem odd that a writing such as the Protevangelium could fulfill these various apologetic and polemical functions at one and the same time. Already Tertullian recognized that Marcion's understanding of Christ coming into the world coincided with the non-Christian Jewish view, that he was not the Christ predicted by Scripture:

> So, then, since heretical madness was claiming that that Christ had come who had never been previously mentioned, it followed that it had to contend that that Christ was not yet come who had from all time been foretold: and so it was compelled to form an alliance with Jewish error, and from it to build up an argument for itself. (*Adv. Marc*. 3.6)

Or as he says more pithily (he restates the argument repeatedly):

> It is now possible for the heretic to learn, and the Jew as well, what he ought to know already, the reason for the Jew's errors: for from the Jew the heretic has accepted guidance in this discussion, the blind borrowing from the blind, and has fallen into the same ditch. (3.7)

At the same time, an anti-docetic function of the text may appear less plausible since the physical nature of the boy Jesus is not emphasized at all, except to the extent that Mary was obviously physically pregnant before giving birth; hence the horror of Joseph and the Jewish priests.[25] But when Jesus comes into the world he scarcely seems to be a real child who has experienced a real birth: he does not appear to have come through the birth canal (hence the postpartum "proof") and he is able already to walk (as he toddles over to his mother) and to perform miracles (curing Salome's burning hand). If this was a forger who wanted to stress the reality of the fleshly appearance of Jesus, who appeared in the world as a real human being, born like other humans, he did a rather bad job of it.

It is more likely, then, that if polemics are involved at all, they are directed against an adoptionistic view of Christ. What seems relatively certain is that whether or not internecine conflicts affected the account, the apologetic need was foremost. This is a forgery that defends Jesus and his mother against the charges leveled against them by antagonistic opponents of the faith, allegedly written by someone uniquely qualified to know the truth of the matter.

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP

In a very different apologetic vein are the martyrologies that begin to appear in the Christian literary tradition beginning in the early third century. I give that date in full cognizance of its problems. Normally the first instantiation of the genre is taken to be the Martrydom of Polycarp, usually dated to within a year of Polycarp's execution, which is variously located—based on a number of complex factors—to the middle of the second century or a bit later (156 CE? 177 CE?).[26] But the date of the narrative correlates to the time of Polycarp's death only if we take at face value the author's claim to have been eyewitness at the event. That, however, is precisely the point that must be decided. Whether it is a contemporary account, or one written much later, the Martyrdom of Polycarp has clear apologetic features. In this it is like the other martyrologies that sprang up in its wake, which strive to show both that the Christians were innocent of any wrongdoing that might have warranted their harsh treatment and that in the midst of their suffering they received such divine succor as to reveal the ultimate truth of the religion for which they were willing to die.

The description of the arrest, trial, and martyrdom of Polycarp comes to us in the form of a letter allegedly written by a member of Polycarp's home church of Smyrna who had, along with the others, observed the execution. It is addressed to the church of Philomelium: "The church of God that temporarily resides in Smyrna to the church of God that temporarily resides in Philomelium, and to all congregations of temporary residents everywhere, who belong to the holy and universal church (Pref.)."[27]

The account was not, of course, actually written by the entire church, but by someone belonging to it. We learn at the end of the letter that this was a person named Evaristus (20.2: "the one who is writing the letter"; this would make him either the actual author or the scribe taking dictation). Marcion (unrelated to the heretic of the same name; 20.1) was the one who allegedly carried the letter and authenticated its contents (διὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ἡμῶν Μαρκίωνος).[28] The letter has not come down to us in a straight line of transmission, however. According to the

concluding colophon, it was copied several times within solidly proto-orthodox avenues of production, but came to be lost until a preternatural vision revealed its existence to Pionius, himself a later martyr, whose own death is described (in a different text) in ways highly reminiscent of Polycarp's, as we will see. Pionius' copy of the letter, then, brought the account out of hibernation and made it more widely available:

> Gaius transcribed these things from the papers of Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp; he also lived in the same city as Irenaeus. And I, Socrates, have written these things in Corinth from the copies made by Gaius. May Grace be with everyone. And I, Pionius, then sought these things and produced a copy from the one mentioned above, in accordance with a revelation of the blessed Polycarp, who showed it to me, as I will explain in what follows. And I gathered these papers together when they were nearly worn out by age…. (22.2–3)

It is clear even from a superficial reading of the "Martyrdom" that it was never meant to be a disinterested account of the death of Polycarp, but had from the outset literary pretensions and apologetic motives. The author engages in polemics against other groups, including the Jews who are especially eager to participate in the killing of the Christian witness, and, from a completely other sphere, the voluntary martyrs (Montanists?) who, contrary to the Gospel (and contrary to Polycarp), needlessly offer themselves up as sacrifices to the cause. Yet more germane for our purposes, the account goes out of its way to show that Polycarp's death was "in conformity with the Gospel"; on page after page the events mirror episodes known from the canonical accounts of Jesus' passion. In addition, the author stresses not only that true martyrs were doing the will of God, but that as a reward God gave them strength to endure their inhumane torments with a fortitude that could only be ascribed to divine intervention (e.g., 2.2–4). One result was the amazement of the crowds who looked on, who realized that the Christians were not normal humans (2.2–4, 3.2, 16.1). In other words, this work is driven by an apologetic impulse to defend the divine character of this persecuted religion.

Older Questions About Historicity

It has long been recognized that there are problems with taking the Martyrdom of Polycarp at face value as a straightforward historical record of what actually

happened to the bishop of Smyrna. The numerous parallels to the Gospel records of Jesus' death appear contrived in places, the account is chock full of miraculous elements, some of which—one immediately thinks of the dove that emerges from Polycarp's side when the executioner slices him open—are too dubious even for the most credulous of critical readers, and the events in the aftermath of his death, when the Christians gather his remains to store in a sacred place to be revered on the "birthday" of his death, are difficult to assign to a generously early date. Or so it has seemed, at least, to some scholars since Lipsius first raised questions about the authenticity of the account in 1874.[29] It was four years later that a thorough assault was made by Theodor Keim,[30] who argued that the Martyrdom was dependent on the Letter of Lyons and Vienne and on the Acts of Thecla (Polycarp's blood dowsing his fire was drawn from the miraculous thunderstorm that dowsed Thecla's). The account, then, could not date from before the end of the second century. Moreover, the phrase "the catholic church in Smyrna" (16.2) indicates, for Keim, that it was written at a time when local churches were differentiating themselves from one another, and that Smyrna had a number of churches in its midst, only one of which was claiming to be the "catholic" church. This, for Keim, must indicate a date no earlier than Cyprian. Moreover, the lull in the persecution at the time the letter was written would fit the period immediately following the persecution of Decius. Some such mid-third-century date makes sense, as well, of a number of other themes in the book: the sacrificial deaths of martyrs in relation to the death of Christ (a theme first found in Tertullian); the reverence of a martyr's death day; the valuation of the martyr's bones as "precious stones" (not attested otherwise till the third century); and so on. Keim's conclusion: the account achieved its shape only some time in the third century.[31]

Scholarship in this field, however, is resilient, and most historians continued to take the account at face value as an eyewitness report, with, perhaps, a few excesses at key points. A major shift occurred with the work of Hans von Campenhausen, who provided a critically respectable way of isolating a historical kernel in the account, while recognizing that it is also filled with literary and theological excesses that occasionally compromise its historical veracity.[32] Von Campenhausen's famous and influential claim was that an original bare-bones account of the death of Polycarp had been redacted several times over the years, into the form we now have. The grounds for evaluating the various redactions were not only the anachronisms and supernatural elements, but also the fact that when Eusebius cites the account, he intimates the existence of a different, much shorter version of the events.

Von Campenhausen argued that the original eyewitness account of Polycarp's death underwent four redactions, most of them after Eusebius' day. An anti-Montanist redactor added to the account the condemnation of Quintus and of voluntary martyrdom in chapter 4, as well as the reverence for the martyrs in 17.2–3 and 18.2. A "Gospel Redactor," working after Eusebius, added the well-known parallels that showed Polycarp's death was very much like that of Jesus. A later redactor added several miraculous elements to the account (5.2, 15.2). Finally both the epilogue dating the event (ch. 21) and the colophon indicating the transmission history of the text (ch. 22) were added at a later stage. Once one removes these *Interpolationen*, one is left with an authentic account of Polycarp's death recorded by an eyewitness.

Von Campenhausen's view was controversial and found considerable resistance among some reviewers, who found the proliferation of redactors excessive.[33] It nonetheless had its attractions, as indicated by the most recent study—critical of the authenticity of the account—by Candida Moss: "Contesting the integrity of the account itself has formed a kind of via media for scholars wishing both to account for anachronisms and to preserve the historical quality of the account."[34] As Dehandschutter noted, "This theory became a 'commonplace' for much research within German scholarship."[35] Since the 1980s, however, it has fallen on hard times, as seen in the works of Dehandschutter, Saxer, and Buschmann.[36] As Schoedel was able to state: "Although serious doubts have been entertained about the integrity of MPol, critical opinion is now moving in the opposite direction…. Here, then, is the final rejection of the notion that originally MPol would naturally have contained a more or less factual account uncontaminated by miracles and explicit theological reflection."[37]

And yet, one is still left with enormous problems. If the questions raised concerning the integrity of the account cannot be sustained, one still has a report that both claims to be by an eyewitness and that presents numerous nonhistorical and anachronistic features. In light of the latter, can the book really be accepted as coming from an eyewitness?

A renewed attack on the authenticity of the account was launched by Silvia Ronchey in 1990.[38] Ronchey argued that the Martyrdom derives from the late third century (260–80 CE), about a century after Polycarp's death (which she dates to 167 CE), and was written largely for polemical reasons. The account comes from a single author and is not heavily redacted. In her view, Lipsius and Keim were right to recognize that the anachronisms of the text need to be taken seriously as markers of a late date; moreover, the denunciation of voluntary

martyrdom in the Quintus episode of chapter 4 is aimed at Montanists, specifically in the church of Philomelium, and thus could be possible only in the third century when Montanism was strong in Phrygia. Other nonhistorical features involve the downplaying of the role of the imperial governor in Polycarp's death, the elevated role of the mob, and of the Jews in particular. All these features are to be explained as an attempt to exculpate the Roman governor. The text is, in other words, a pro-Roman polemic—or rather apologia—dated best in the late third century.

Renewed Questions of Authenticity

It must be said that reviewers were not kind to Ronchey's monograph, and few found it convincing.[39] But as Moss has vigorously argued more recently, one does not need to follow Ronchey in all of her positions in order to recognize the enormous problems with the text. In fact, given these problems it is very hard indeed to see how the account can be accepted as anything like trustworthy—that is, an authentic, eyewitness account.

To begin with—a factor rarely noted—it is precisely the claims of the author to be an eyewitness that show we are not dealing with an eyewitness account. One should notice where the author's asseverations occur. They occur at the very points of the narrative that are the most incredible and least susceptible of critical acceptance. Whenever a miracle happens, the author vouches for its occurrence by claiming to have observed it. The first time this happens is already in the summarizing account of the unbelievable noble endurance of torments by the Christian martyrs:

> For who would not be astounded by their nobility, endurance, and love of the Master? For they endured even when their skin was ripped to shreds by whips, revealing the very anatomy of their flesh, down to the inner veins and arteries, while bystanders felt pity and wailed. But they displayed such nobility that none of them either grumbled or moaned, clearly showing us all that in that hour, while under torture, the martyrs of Christ had journeyed far away from the flesh, or rather, that the Lord was standing by, speaking to them. (2.2)

Not only did the Christians face brutal and excruciating torture, but they—all of them—refrained even from uttering a moan. That showed "to us" that they were receiving divine succor.

Credulity is strained even more in the next two eyewitness reports. The first is when Polycarp enters the place of his final trial: “But as he entered the stadium a voice came to Polycarp from heaven: ‘Be strong Polycarp, and be a man.’ No one saw who had spoken, but those among our people who were there heard the voice.” (9.1). This voice from heaven, then, was not heard by anyone else; it was a miraculous exhortation available only to the Christians with privileged access to the heavenly realm.

The final eyewitness guarantee of a miracle is the most striking. It occurs at the first attempt of the enemies of God to destroy his cherished saint:

> When [Polycarp] sent up the “Amen” and finished the prayer, the men in charge of the fire touched it off. And as a great flame blazoned forth we beheld a marvel—we to whom it was granted to see, who have also been preserved to report the events to the others. For the fire, taking on the appearance of a vaulted room, like a boat’s sail filled with the wind, formed a wall around the martyrs’ body. And he was in the center, not like burning flesh but like baking bread or like gold and silver being refined in a furnace. And we perceived a particularly sweet aroma, like wafting incense or some other precious perfume. (15.1–2)

The fire does not touch the martyr’s body, but forms a wall around him; his body was not burned; and what wafted from the pyre was not the smell of reeking flesh but of perfume. Not everyone noticed this, though, but only the eyewitness who can guarantee the truth of the report since he and the other Christians were there, were really there.

The problem with this alleged eyewitness report should be clear. It is precisely at the most disputable and incredible parts of the narrative that the author inserts himself as someone who can testify to what he heard, saw, and smelled. He does not insert himself at nonproblematic points. His self-assertion is meant, then, to provide much-needed assurance for anyone inclined to think that those tortured ever might have moaned, or who doubt that voices come down from the heavens, or who might reasonably think that the flesh of martyrs could burn or stink.[40]

Apart from the miraculous elements of the text—which include the martyr’s blood gushing forth in such profusion as to douse the flames of his pyre, and a dove emerging from his side and flying to the heavens—there are other clearly nonhistorical features of the text, which should at least give one pause before too readily insisting that this really is a firsthand report. For one thing, it defies

belief that the animal games and execution of criminals described in the text could have happened in a “stadium” (8.3, 9.1). Animal hunts happened in amphitheaters, where the high walls would protect the crowds from hungry beasts who might want the choice morsels on offer by spectators, as Gary Bisbee notes:

> Tò στάδιον would most properly denote a race track and not a place of butchery such as was the amphitheater. The stadium was normally a long and open-ended construction, often amounting to little more than a race track between two hills upon which spectators sat. A stadium would not have had the high inner walls that an amphitheater possessed to keep wild animals and gladiators from killing spectators.[41]

This was not written by someone who was there, or possibly by someone who was *ever* present at animal hunts, gladiatorial contests, or Christian executions. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that there is no official trial of the condemned, but only a summary mock trial that does not follow any known legal precedent (even though allegedly “observed” by an eyewitness). Even Bisbee, who very much wants to find something historical lying behind the traditions of the narrative, acknowledges that the account as we have it is not a real trial, based on a surviving commentarius. If a real trial did take place, it would have happened sometime before the scene in the stadium.[42] But it is difficult to imagine when that might have been, given the flow of the narrative. It is better, with Moss, to see this account as modeled not on something that actually happened but on the Gospel accounts.[43]

The other pretensions to historicity in the account also fail. In chapter 21 the author gives us a precise indication of when the martyrdom took place: the eighth hour “on the second day of the new month of Xanthikos, February 23,” when “Philip of Tralles was high priest” and “Statius Quadratus was proconsul.” In this attempt to locate the narrative in time and place, however, the author has blundered. Timothy Barnes has shown that the dates simply do not work. Philip the Asiarch was high priest in 149–50, but “no conceivable argument will put the pro-consulate of Statius Quadratus before 153/4.”[44] There was, in other words, a three year gap—and no one writing at either time could fail to know that the two terms did not overlap. This is written by someone living later.

And what he is writing is a kind of historical legend. The legendary character of the account is seen in numerous details, including the remarkable “coincidences” that make Polycarp’s trial and death so much like that of Jesus:

Polycarp does not turn himself in but waits to be betrayed (1.2); he knows about his coming execution in advance and predicts it to his followers (5.2); he prays intensely before his arrest (7.1–3); he asks that God's will be done (7.1); the official in charge of his arrest is named Herod (6.2); Polycarp rides into town on a donkey (8.1); and so on. These are literary touches, not historical recollections. So too other parts of the story, including the remarkable account of Germanicus in chapter 3, who evidently has a wild beast standing meekly by, waiting for his suicidal impulse. To leave this life, he drags the beast-in-waiting onto himself, forcing it to kill him. It is hard indeed to know how we are supposed to imagine this actually worked.

And then there is Quintus, the voluntary martyr turned coward. As Moss has argued, the Quintus episode creates enormous problems for the traditional dating of the text, seen simply from a traditio-historical perspective. If the account dates, say, from 155–167 (as we have seen, scholars differ), then we have the unparalleled situation that this text is the earliest to recognize the category of "martyr" at all; at the same time it is also the first to refer to voluntary martyrs; and yet further, it is the first to condemn the practice of voluntary martyrdom. As Moss notes: "it is remarkable to suppose that the first text to construct an ideology of martyrdom accurately anticipates later 'enthusiasm' for an as-yet-undefined practice."[45]

Problematic for entirely other reasons is the account of what happens in the aftermath of Polycarp's death. The Jews, moved by the devil, are intent not to allow the Christians to collect Polycarp's body "even though many were desiring to do so and to have a share in his holy flesh" (ch. 17). And so, the centurion ordered the body to be burned. That did not hinder the Christians' enthusiasm for Polycarp's material remains, however: "And so, afterwards, we removed his bones, which were more valuable than expensive gems and more precious than gold, and put them in a suitable place." It is there that the author anticipates celebrating, with his fellow believers, the "birthday of his martyrdom."

One might be able to imagine some kind of "cult of the martyr" already at the time of Polycarp's death, as Saxer and others have argued.[46] But where do we observe anything like this adoration of the martyr's relics? Outside of this text, we do not find such a thing, as Moss has noted, until the third-century Acts of Thomas (dated ca. 230 CE).[47] Polycarp's body is not simply treated here with respect and given a decent burial. His bones are considered more precious than gems and gold and are stored where worship takes place. Yet "the practice of collecting and venerating the bodies of the martyrs is unparalleled in second-century Christian literature."[48] The author, in fact, has to defend the practice by

claiming that the adoration of the remains of the martyr would never replace the worship of Christ (17.2). This defense shows that the practice was far enough advanced as to be open to attack. In other words, it came at a time when adoration of relics was a known and criticized phenomenon.

Equally telling is one other portion of the text meant to ensure its authenticity, but which, when examined critically, has precisely the opposite effect. The colophon, as cited already above, provides a kind of history of transmission of the text, in which Irenaeus had a copy of the book among his papers, which was then copied by Gaius, whose work was copied by Socrates; then, many years later, when the copy of Socrates was old and falling to ruin, it was revitalized by Pionius, who received a revelation from the martyred Polycarp himself, presumably telling him where to find the manuscript. The general implausibilities of the case—involving visions of a long-dead Polycarp and the miraculous recovery of his story—speak against anything like historicity. The narrative functions, in fact, like the eyewitness reports generally in this account, to make believable that which, on the surface, defies belief. If this closing account were historical, it would be passing strange that Irenaeus himself, the ultimate authority cited, never mentions either the letter of Polycarp or the martyrdom. It cannot be objected that the colophon was added only later after the original text had long been in circulation; we have no manuscripts that lack it, but only an extended form in the Moscow manuscript that heightens its original emphases. The idea of a story of discovery is by now familiar to us. It functions here as it does in other places, such as the Apocalypse of Paul, to explain why the account has now surfaced in the middle to late third century (after the days of Pionius) when it was previously unknown to interested Christian readers.

From all these historical problems, it should be clear that the Martyrdom of Polycarp does not go back to an eyewitness account written within a year of the event, say 157 or 166 CE. It was written at least some fifty years later. It was not really produced by Evaristus, carried and authenticated by Marcion, on behalf of the Christians of Smyrna who, along with the two named figures, actually saw these things take place. It is a legendary account written simply as if by eyewitnesses. And so it is a forgery. The events it narrates had been in oral circulation down to the time of the author, which is no doubt why there are remnants of historical reminiscences that do indeed make sense in a second-century setting.[49] The story was not made up whole cloth. But it was also not a firsthand account. Its attempts to validate its miraculous claims are simply part of the forgery; by claiming to have been there, the author can establish the truth

claims of his message.

It should be reemphasized that the author is interested in other forms of polemic as well. He is most emphatically opposed to voluntary martyrdom that the orthodox later came to associate—rightly or wrongly is beside the point, for our purposes—with the Montanist movement (ch. 4). Moreover, it is the Jews who are said to be the most eager (and accustomed) to gather the firewood to burn the Christians (13.1); and they are key in the refusal to provide access to the corpse once the deed is done (17.2). They are the enemy, more than the governor who is driven by the mobs to condemn Polycarp. Here again, then, the apologetic impulses of the text accompany its opposition to the Jews. Its major contention, however, is that God was on the side of Polycarp as he was on the side of the other martyrs who preceded him in dying a death "in conformity with the Gospel." At the end of the day, this is apologia in martyrological guise, produced as an eyewitness testimony by a forger who wanted his readers to know that they could rest assured in the factual accuracy of his legendary report.

OTHER MARTYROLOGIES

The Martyrdom of Polycarp is not the only martyrology to come down to us from the early church that is written as a first-person narrative in order to authenticate the accuracy of its tales. There are, of course, a large number of martyr texts. Those with the greatest (though often slight) claims to "reliability" have been collected in the handy edition by Mursurillo.[50] More than anyone else, Gary Bisbee has tried to show how one can establish what is historical in them.[51] There are no grounds, however, for seeing any of them as thoroughly accurate representatives of what actually happened. Most of the accounts are simply third-person narratives; some of them, though, do contain first-person passages that function to "guarantee" the accuracy of the report. With the exception of the well-known first example that we will consider, the first-person narrators are not named, however, and so in these instances we are dealing with non-pseudepigraphic forgeries.[52]

The Passion of Perpetua

Augustine was the first to express doubts about the authorship of the "diary" kept by Perpetua prior to her martyrdom in 203 CE. When speaking of Perpetua's brother Dinocrates, Augustine says in passing "… nor does the saint herself, or whoever it was who wrote the account…"[53] Whereas many scholars continue to

think the diary an authentic production of Perpetua herself,[54] others have harbored considerable doubt. A particularly interesting case has been made by Thomas Heffernan, who focuses on how the verb tenses and sequences work in the piece.[55] Although Heffernan acknowledges that the genres of “diary” and “autobiography” were not set in stone in antiquity, they do evidence a difference in reference to time. Autobiography “provides attempts to a coherent interpretation of the past from a future perspective.”[56] A diary, on the other hand, gives accounts of the past as fragments of experience as perceived from the present. Diaries, then, do not provide unified coherence between past events; they tend to be episodic and to lack any kind of teleology. An autobiography, in contrast, reconstitutes the self as an agent in an attempt to impose meaning on events.

For Heffernan, the Passio Perpetua is a kind of “hybrid of these two types.” But what is most striking is that the verb tenses fit an autobiographical mode, in which the past connections are used to provide temporal coherence. Terms such as “after a few days,” or “many days,” or “a few hours later” indicate the passage of time and so provide a kind of narrative sequence. The reason this matters: “Such periodicity is not typical of a narrative written diurnally, in snatches when the hideous oppression of the prison abated; rather it suggests a composition written sometime after the events have transpired.”[57]

If Heffernan is right, then what we have in the Diary of Perpetua is not a diary, but a later author—claiming to be Perpetua—writing in autobiographical mode, pretending to write a diary. In other words, the “diary” would be a forgery, a conclusion reached by other scholars on yet other grounds.[58] Like the other martyrological texts, it functions apologetically in showing that, contrary to appearances, God is at work in the lives and sufferings of the martyrs, empowering them in the face of horrible opposition and torment, and using them as a witness to the truth of the gospel.

The Martyrdom of Pionius

Probably written sometime around 300 CE the Martyrdom of Pionius “is the only substantial martyrdom that we possess which pretends to date from the period of the Decian persecution.”[59] The opening of the account is a bit odd, in that it indicates that the bulk of the writing—which is narrated almost entirely in the third person—is a book by Pionius about himself (even though for the most part it does not employ the first person):

> More fitting is it that we should remember the martyr Pionius seeing that this apostolic man, being one of us, kept many from straying while he dwelt in the world, and when he was finally called to the Lord and bore witness, he left us this writing for our instruction that we might have it even to this day as a memorial of his teaching. (1.2)[60]

The account does not move into the first person until near the end, and then it is clearly not Pionius speaking, as the author claims to have witnessed the miracles that transpired at the martyr's death. The entire account, however, bears the marks of literary license, if not wholesale invention, since, as widely recognized, it is modeled on the Martyrdom of Polycarp. As we have seen, Pionius, not coincidentally, is named in the earlier martyrdom as the one who received a revelation from the long-dead Polycarp concerning the whereabouts of the lost account of his martyrdom. The account of Pionius' own martyrdom, perhaps not remarkably, is dated to the anniversary of Polycarp's (a century later); it too occurs on a Great Sabbath. Here, as in the earlier account, the Christian martyr is wounded, but acts as if he is not. Here too the execution occurs, remarkably, in a stadium. A figure named Marcion appears in both texts—here in connection with a follower of the heretic who is martyred along with the orthodox man of God. The Jewish antipathy is as strong here as in the earlier account. The author speaks of Jews as the "enemies" (4.8), and asks rhetorically "Who forced the Jews to sacrifice to Beelphegor? Or partake of the sacrifices offered to the dead? Or to fornicate with the daughters of foreigners ? Or to sacrifice their sons and daughters to idols? To murmur against God? To slander Moses?" (4.11) With biting contrast the author indicates that "*we* did not slay our prophets nor did we betray Christ and crucify him" (13.2).

It is not until the end of the account that the author introduces a first-person narrative:

> For after the fire had been extinguished, those of us who were present saw his body like that of an athlete in full array at the height of his powers. His ears were not distorted; his hair lay in order on the surface of his head; and his beard was full as though with the first blossom of hair. His face shone once again—wondrous grace!—so that the Christians were all the more confirmed in the faith, and those who had lost the faith returned dismayed and with fearful consciences. (22.2–4)

Here too, then, we have an author who wants to be both an eyewitness and a

faithful testifier to the miraculous events surrounding the martyrdom of one beloved of God. But the account, as widely recognized, is an invention; the author was merely claiming to have seen it take place. Here again we have an instance of non-pseudepigraphic forgery.

The Martyrdom of Marian and James

There is no better way to show the unusual authorial problems of the early-fourth-century Martyrdom of Marian and James than to provide a lengthy citation of its narrative, in which the author is the closest companion of the martyrs who accompanies them at the time of their arrest:

> To me have these noble witnesses of God left the task of proclaiming their glory, I refer to Marian and James, among the dearest of our brethren. Both of these as you are aware, were bound to me not only by our common sharing in the mystery of our faith, but also by the fact that we lived together in a family spirit…. It was their wish that their battle … should be communicated to their fellow Christians through me…. And it was not without reason that in their close intimacy they laid upon me the task which I am about to fulfill. For who can question the common life we shared in times of peace when the same period of persecution discovered us living in unbroken affection? (1.2–4)
>
> We were on our way together to Numidia…. But an entire band of violent and unscrupulous centurions swooped on the country-house which sheltered us as though it was a notorious centre of the faith.… And while the ripe hour of the divine choice made more stringent demands on them, it also bound me to them with a tiny share in my brothers' glory; for I too was dragged from Muguae to Cirta…. For in exhorting me with special intensity they betrayed by their effusive joy the fact that they too were Christians. They were then questioned and were led off to prison…. (2.1; 4.3, 6, 9–10)

It is difficult indeed to understand how the author himself was not arrested and sent to prison, if he really was such a close companion and eyewitness of all these things. Musurillo can simply assume that "the author had presumably been freed as not falling under the Valerian edicts" (p. xxxiv) although the account says nothing of the matter. Moreover, Musurillo admits that "some scholars have

had serious doubts about the authenticity" of the account (p. xxxiii). A serious option worth entertaining is that here again we have a martyrology written in the first person not because the author was really there to see these things happen, but in order to stimulate interest in his account and assure the reader of its accuracy.

The Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius

Often thought to have been based on work produced by a disciple of Cyprian,[61] the Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius is another account of the execution of Christian clergy under the persecution of Valerian. It is allegedly written by one of the Christians who was arrested, as a kind of memoir that cannot help but call to mind the Passion of Perpetua, as here too a number of visions of those who are jail-bound are presented, reliably, by a first-person narrator:

> Love and a sense of obligation have urged us to write this account, that we might leave to all future brethren a loyal witness to the grandeur of God and a historical record of our labours and our sufferings for the Lord (1.1)…. All of us were arrested (2.1)…. We got the news of our sentence from the soldiers: the governor had threatened us the day before with fire…. (3.1)[62]

At chapter 12 the narrative shifts to a different "first person," reminiscent, again, of the Passio Perpetua: "This was the joint letter written to us from prison.… Flavian privately enjoined on me the task of adding to their account whatever might be missing. Hence I have added the rest as was necessary." This new author continues on, then, with a third-person narrative (with occasional references to himself as an observer) to the end. The first-person narrators are here again interspersed with third-person narrations, both to add immediacy to the account and to verify the accuracy of its reports. Not everyone has been fooled, however; in their 1890 edition of *The Passion of Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas*, J. Rendell Harris and S. K. Gifford called it "a deliberate forgery."[63]

The Acts of Ignatius (Antiochene Version)

The legendary account of Ignatius' death by wild beasts in the arena in Rome comes to us in several forms, the most important of which, historically, is the so-called Antiochene version, which provides us, as well, with the authentic letter

of Ignatius to the Romans, otherwise lacking from the epistles' textual tradition. Since Lightfoot's withering criticism, the Acts themselves have rarely been taken seriously as historical.[64] The surviving account is normally thought to derive from the fifth century, although Bisbee argues, somewhat implausibly, that it is ultimately based on a near contemporaneous second-century commentarius. In any event, the work that we have is late.[65]

The widely recognized problems with the account, as recounted by Lightfoot and Bisbee, include the following[66]:

- The trial before the emperor Trajan in Antioch is dated to 106–07 CE, the ninth year of his reign; but Trajan did not come to Antioch until some seven years later.
- The route taken by Ignatius in the Acts does not coincide with that presupposed in the authentic letters.
- Whereas there is no persecution of the churches of Asia Minor in evidence in the authentic Ignatian letters, it is presupposed here.
- Ignatius' own letter to Polycarp intimates that the two first met while Ignatius was en route to his martyrdom; in the Acts they have been companions from long before, as they both sat at the feet of the disciple John.
- There is no reference to the Acts in either Eusebius or Jerome; and no manuscript attests the Acts until the sixth century.

Even though the trial of Ignatius is here narrated in the third person, the author moves to a first-person account, strikingly, as in the Acts of the Apostles, during a sea voyage leading to martyrdom: "Therefore continuing to enjoy fair winds, we were reluctantly hurried on in one day and a night" (ch. 5).[67] The account describes Ignatius' martyrdom by the wild beasts (ch. 6), and we are told that "only the harder portions of his holy remains were left, which were conveyed to Antioch and wrapped in linen, as an inestimable treasure left to the holy church by the grace which was in the martyr" (ch. 6). The account itself is then ensured through a first-person declaration:

> Having ourselves been eyewitnesses of these things, and having spent the whole night in tears within the house … it happened, when we fell deeply asleep, that some of us saw the blessed Ignatius suddenly standing among us and embracing us, while others saw him again praying for us, and still others saw him dripping with sweat, as if he had just come from his great labor, and standing by the Lord. When,

> therefore, we had with great joy witnessed these things and had compared our several visions together, we sang praise to God…. (ch. 7)

Here, then, as with the much-earlier Martyrdom of Polycarp, the first-person narrative serves to validate the claim to have observed a divine miracle.

All these martyrologies appear to have served multiple functions among their Christian readership. On one level they were entertaining, if in a rather grisly way. They also provided models of behavior for those who themselves might be threatened with persecution, torture, and death. And, importantly for our purposes, they were apologiae for the truthfulness of the Christian message in the face of opposition to it. Justin suggested that his observation of Christian martyrs played a role in his conversion (2 *Apol*. 12), and Tertullian famously argued against his belligerent pagan opponents that "We become more numerous every time we are hewn down by you: the blood of Christians is seed" (*Apol*. 50). The texts describing martyrdoms functioned in a similar way at the literary level, apologetically. They revealed the truth of the Christian gospel in the face of violent opposition to it, with the valiant deaths of the martyrs testifying to the power of God in the midst of a world that brought all its power to bear against him and his servants.

THE SYBILLINE ORACLES

Markedly different, but also fulfilling an apologetic function, the Sybilline oracles consist of twelve books of Jewish and Christian origin that present the "predictions" of the ancient pagan Sibyl. An anonymous Byzantine scholar of the sixth century CE compiled the surviving collection, which spans a seven-hundred-year period. He claims that he brought these writings together because he wanted to provide in one place oracles otherwise widely dispersed, which together, he avers,

> expound very clearly about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the divine Trinity, source of life; about the incarnate career of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, the birth, I mean, from an unchanging virgin, and the healings performed by him; similarly his life-giving passion and resurrection from the dead on the third day and the judgment which will take place. (Prologue)[68]

In fact, the majority of the oracles are not about the Trinity or Christ at all, but are of non-Christian Jewish origin. Two of them are indeed Christian (one, certainly), and several others represent Christian redactions of Jewish originals (through heavy interpolation).

Because of a fluke of transmission, the twelve books are numbered 1–8 and 11–14. The background to the collection involves the famous but no longer surviving pagan Sibylline oracles of Roman and, predominantly, Greek extraction. The full story of these "original" oracles is found elsewhere and need not deter us at great length; the story from Republican through early Imperial times, though, can be summarized briefly.[69]

From an early age there were known to be prophecies of the great Sibyl, an ancient Greek prophetess of astounding longevity attuned to communications of the gods, which she delivered in hexameter verse, often with the use of acrostics. As these prophecies proliferated over time, and came to be associated with numerous locations, stories arose of Sibyls living in different places. Varro made the canonical claim that there were ten Sibyls altogether.

In Roman times the best-known collection of the oracles came to be stored in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the capitol in Rome; these were consulted by the quindecimviri, on direction of the Senate, when divine instruction was sought in times of plague, famine, and prodigy. Evidently the collected books indicated the necessary ritual for dealing with dire situations. There is record of the books having been consulted some fifty times between 496 and 100 BCE. In 83 BCE, while Sulla was fighting his way up through Italy, the temple was destroyed, and with it the deposit of Sibylline books. That oracles had been widely in circulation before the event is shown by what happened in the wake of their disappearance from the capitol. In 76 BCE the consul Caius Curio proposed a commission to go to Erythrea in search of replacement oracles. The results were disappointing: only about a thousand verses were gathered from private sources (about a third of what had been lost). Further expeditions yielded other oracles in other localities. The quindecimviri were given the task of editing what had been collected. We do not know the criteria they used, but they evidently detected and expunged certain verses as interpolations.

In 28 BCE Augustus transferred the books to his new marble temple of Apollo on the Palatine. In 12 BCE, when he became pontifex maximus, Augustus ordered the retrieval of all circulating prophetic books in Greek and Latin. Those that were anonymous or of unsuitable authorship were burned, some two thousand of them. Others were added to the official collection. Evidently these actions were

undertaken to ensure that no unauthorized oracles would be in circulation; individuals were no longer allowed to possess any.

In 19 CE Tiberius had to deal with a popular rumor of a sibylline prophecy that Rome would perish "when thrice three hundred years have passed over" (a prophecy taken to refer to contemporary times). Tiberius intervened, declared the verses spurious, inspected all books of oracles in circulation, and burned the ones he disapproved of.

Eventually all the books were lost or destroyed. What we have now are Jewish and Christian versions, in which forgers, claiming to be the great Sibyl herself, place Jewish and Christian ideas, views, and predictions on the lips of the ancient prophetess.[70] Many of the Jewish creations are associated with Alexandria and evidence several obvious polemical and apologetic functions: to condemn idolatry; to propagate the Jewish faith, especially monotheism and ethics; and to stress the coming of eschatological judgment, particularly as this relates to the ultimate doom and downfall of Rome. As noted, the surviving Christian Sibyllina correlate to the Pseudo-Ignatian writings in that they constitute both original compositions and extensive redactions. In my discussion here I will deal with the interpolations first and then consider the original, forged, creations. In each instance we are probably dealing with different authors, who had, however, similar purposes. Among other things, they shared the common goal of apologia: the great and trustworthy pagan prophetess, the Sibyl, attests to the truth of the Christian message, and, especially, the truth of the Christian Savior.

The Christian Interpolations

As samples of how Christian authors placed their views both in the context of Jewish oracles and, as a consequence, on the lips of the ancient Sibyl, we can consider the striking examples from books 1, 2, and 8. Books 1 and 2 were originally a unity, composed together, by a Jewish author, but redacted at some time in the midsecond century, according to the dating of Collins.[71] Together these two books recount (or rather "predict") the appearance of ten generations of humans on earth, leading up to the time of the end. For some unknown reason —possibly in the course of the Christian redaction—generations eight and nine have dropped out of the work. The tenor of the book is established at the outset:

> Beginning from the first generation of articulate men Down to the last, I will prophesy all in turn, Such things as were before, as are, and as will

come upon The world through the impiety of men. (1.1–4)

There follows a discussion of the creation and "fall," and then the history of the human race in ten generations. A major Christian interpolation occurs in II. 324–400, in the midst of a discussion of the seventh generation of humans (the Titans). The interpolation is about Christ, his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and its effect on the Jews:

Then indeed the son of the great God will come,
Incarnate, likened to mortal men on earth,
Bearing four vowels, and the consonants in him are two.
I will state explicitly the entire number for you.
For eight units, and equal number of tens in addition to these,
And eight hundreds will reveal the name
To men who are sated with faithlessness. But you, consider in your heart
Christ, the son of the most high, immortal God. (II. 324–31)

The clever gematria is of the name ΙΗΣΟΥΣ, whose letters add up, remarkably, to 888. Not only, however, does the interpolation provide a pagan prediction of the coming of Christ. Closely tied to it is a vitriolic attack on the Jewish people, pronounced here by a pagan oracle in support of a Christian agenda. And so the oracle says that "Israel, with abominable lips and poisonous spittings will give this man blows" (II. 365–66); it also speaks of a "new sprout" that will emerge among the nations, who will "follow the law of the Great one" (by implied contrast with the old stump, II.383–84). The rhetoric becomes especially strong in II. 387–400: the "Hebrews" will "reap a bad harvest"—meaning that they will reap their awful reward for killing Christ. Specifically "a Roman king will ravage much gold and silver"; there will "be a great fall for those men when they launch on unjust haughtiness"; "the Hebrews will be driven from their land, wandering, being slaughtered, they will mix much darnel in their wheat… receiving the wrath of the great God in their bosom, since they committed an evil deed."

The interpolation is thus both apologetic, predicting reliably the coming of Christ, and polemical, against the Jews. This is a combination we have seen before and will see yet again. The Christian redaction of book 2 moves along similar lines, describing the final judgment from a Christian perspective, with Christ as judge, and providing graphic descriptions of the torments of the damned, all accompanied with more anti-Jewish invective.

Book 8 of the Oracles is particularly intriguing. There has been considerable scholarly dispute over how to divide the oracle, with Johannes Geffcken proposing a complex solution that derives three passages from a pagan source, intermingled with Christian redactions,[72] and Collins suggesting a simpler division of the book roughly in half, in which lines 1–216 are Jewish (except for II. 131–38, and a Christian interpolation involving eschatology in II.194–216) and 217–500 are Christian.[73] This Christian section begins in II. 217–50 with one of the best-known and intriguing features of the surviving Sibyllina, an acrostic poem, the first letters of each line spelling out the words ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ. Throughout the poem there is a strong emphasis on the flesh: Christ will "judge all flesh" (II. 218–19); the flesh of the dead will arise (I. 227); "fire will torment the lawless forever" (I. 228). The conclusion then is striking: "This is our God, now proclaimed in acrostics, the king, the immortal savior, who suffered for us" (II. 249–50).

The rest of the Christian interpolation involves a poetic celebration of Christ, a condemnation of idolatry, the need for ethical rigor in the face of the coming judgment, a paean to God, and a recounting of the incarnation event. Here too there appear to be some (implicit, at least) anti-Jewish materials: "They will stab his sides with a reed on account of their law" (I. 296). Even though one might take the referent to be the Romans, the following statement makes it appear to be to the Jews: "every law will be dissolved … on account of a disobedient people" (II. 300–01). This interpretation is confirmed later, in II. 305–8, when the Temple curtain is rent, "for no longer with secret law and temple must one serve the phantoms of the world." Later still the author appeals to "daughter Sion," and speaks of the "yoke of slavery, hard to bear, which lies on our neck … the godless ordinances and constraining bonds" (II. 324–28). And so, once more, we find a mixture of apologetics and polemics, the latter possibly against those who minimize the importance of the flesh, and certainly against the Jews.

The Christian Creations

Book VI of the Sibyllina is completely and incontrovertibly a Christian creation. The poem is quoted by Lactantius thirteen times in *De ira dei*, and so must date some time before 300 CE. A more precise date is not possible. The book presents a short twenty-eight-line hymn to Christ. There is no evidence of a pagan or Jewish substratum, and nothing, in fact, that connects it to the Sibyl, apart from its appearance in the collection. The high Christology of the piece is evident at the outset:

> I speak from my heart of the great famous son of the Immortal, To whom the Most High, his begetter, gave a throne to possess before he was born. …

Here, as in the interpolations, there is a good deal of anti-Jewish polemic. Christ is said to come to "a disobedient people" (I.11); the people of the "land of Sodom" have "evil afflictions … in store" (I. 2l),[74] for the people of this land "did not perceive your God when he came before mortal eyes" (II. 22-23). The author goes on to say that these people were the ones who crowned Christ with thorns and gave him gall to drink (II. 23–25). As a result, the Jewish people will suffer: "That will cause great afflictions for you" (I. 25). The poem ends with a paean to the cross, the "blessed" wood that will ascend from earth and "see heaven as home when your fiery eye, O God, flashes like lightning" (II. 26–28).

John Collins considers book VII also to be a Christian composition, but in this case there is at least a modicum of doubt.[75] There are certainly Christian elements in the oracle, but there are scant grounds for deciding whether these came in by way of interpolation or were part of the original wording. In any event, Collins is certainly right that the book consists of a loose collocation of oracles, some of them judgments against the nations, bracketed, significantly, with descriptions of the past destruction by flood and the future destruction by fire. The Christian elements are for the most part found in II. 64–90. Here Christ is referred to as "your God" and is the one who was not recognized by the inhabitants of Coele-Syria (II. 64–66). A high Christology is evident here in the reference to "the sovereign Word, with the Father and Holy Spirit"; moreover, the incarnation is explicit: Christ "put on flesh but quickly flew to his Father's home" (II. 69–70).

One key passage is found in the ritualistic prescriptions of II. 76–84. Sacrifice to God is to be made, but not by burning incense or slaughtering animals (II. 77–78). Instead the worshiper is to take a wild dove and set it off while gazing to heaven. Then she is to pour a libation of water on pure fire, while crying out the following prayer: "As the father begot you, the Word, so I have dispatched a bird, a word which is swift reporter of words, sprinkling with holy waters your baptism, through which you were revealed out of fire" (II.82–84). Whereas Geffcken and Kurfess consider this to be a Gnostic ritual, and see other traces of Gnostic thought in the use of such terms as "the first ogdoad" (I. 140), John Gager has made an impassioned plea for restraint, arguing that ambiguous ritualistic formulations and isolated Gnostic-like terms a Gnostic text doth not

make; far better simply to see the book as in some sense "syncretistic."[76] Much of the rest of the book deals with judgments on the nations and individuals, especially at the end when fire will devour the earth and all those who live on it, a fire that will torment them not briefly but for the years of ages forever (II. 127–28).

The Sibyllina as Apologetic Forgeries

It is fair to ask whether it is right to see the Christian Sibylline materials as forgeries, in any ordinary sense of the term. On one level they may not seem "forged" in that they represent claims to inspired divine prophecy. On the other hand, the Sibyl was indeed considered to be a human author (although a highly unusual one), who was often thought of as being a historical person from hoary antiquity, and these sundry Christian writers—both the interpolators and literary creators ex nihilo—were claiming to be her. At the least we can say that these books are redactional forgeries, in the sense laid out earlier in the study.[77] Even if book 6 was not originally attributed to the Sibyl (the matter is difficult to judge), in its surviving context it conveys her words. So too with the redacted books: in their present state they represent Christian reflections that are now given not by unknown poets and theologians, but by the great prophetess of Greek antiquity. The authors and redactors do not claim to be conveying the words of a divine being (Apollo, for example), but the words of a seer.

There is another form of Sibylline materials that survives from Christian antiquity, outside of the collection of Oracula Sibyllina that have come down to us. This involves references to and quotations of the Sibyl in Christian writers of the early centuries. Some of the quotations do not correspond with what can now be found in the surviving fourteen books, and so they require a different treatment. In many of these Patristic references the apologetic function of the Christian Sibyl is particularly evident.

Apart from the reference to the Sibyl in the Shepherd of Hermas (a case of false identification, when Hermas thinks the elderly lady representing the church is the ancient prophetess; Vision 2.4), the first clear references occur in Justin: "Indeed Sibyl and Hystaspes foretold that all corruptible things are to be destroyed by fire" (*Apol*. 1. 20). This is an apt summary of what is found in the surviving books; but it is so general as to make closer identification impossible. More telling are the quotations in Pseudo-Justin *Cohortio* (a misattributed, not forged, work). This anonymous apologist refers to the Sibyl on numerous occasions, especially in chapters 16 and 37–38. In chapter 16 we are told that the

"ancient and very old Sibyl" was called by Plato and others a "prophetess"; she is said to have taught through her oracular verses that there is "only one God." The author then provides three quotations of the Sibyl, one indicating that there is "only one unbegotten God" (cf. O. S. 3.11–12), another that the people who worship idols have "strayed from the Immortal's ways" since the idols are the "workmanship of our own hands, and images and figures of dead men" (cf. O.S. 3.721–73); and the other that people should worship the one great God and abjure all shrines, altars, idols, and sacrifices (cf. O.S. 4.24–30). It is striking that all three of the quotations are drawn from, or at least are very similar to, the Jewish, not the Christian, Sibyllina.

The discussion intensifies in chapters 37–38. Chapter 37 discusses the Sibyl but provides no oracular pronouncements. The Sibyl is said to have been of Babylonian extraction, the daughter of Berosus, author of the "Chaldean History." She is said to have gone to the hot springs at Cumae; the author himself has actually seen, he says, the basilica where she bathed and prophesied. She was proclaimed a prophetess by Plato in the Phaedrus, and is one of those he refers to in the Meno who are clearly shown to be inspired by God when they speak in plain and manifest terms the truth about which they are personally unaware. Her prophecies were recorded by ignorant amanuenses, which is why the meter sometimes does not work. She herself, coming out of a trance, did not know what she had said.

This entire discussion is intended to establish the Sibyl as a completely trustworthy source. And what is it that she allegedly said? According to chapter 38, she predicted "in a clear and patent manner, the advent of our Savior Jesus Christ. She also taught that the gods of the idols have no real existence; and she uttered prophecies about the advent of Christ and the things he would do."[78]

Here, then, the author is reliant on early Christian forms of the Oracula Sibyllina, thought to be utterances of a pagan priestess who prophesied the truth when in a state of ecstasy, inspired by the one true God.

An even more extensive use of the oracles of the Sibyl is found in the writings of Lactantius, especially the *Diviniae Institutiones*. Lactantius uses the Sibyl more than any other ecclesiastical writer, and in fact quotes Sibylline material 50 percent more often than he quotes the Old Testament. Unlike Pseudo-Justin, he does not provide long quotations, but only sentences here and there. Still, he cites hundreds of lines altogether. Lactantius shows that he is acquainted in particular with what became books 3–8. He quotes the text in order to discuss monotheism, everlasting life, the "fall," the coming of the Son of God, his life and miracles, passion, resurrection and second coming, the last judgment,

and the general resurrection. In particular, for Lactantius, the Sibyl is a prophetess who foretold Christianity: “Since these events are true and certain of fulfillment, being in agreement with prophecies uttered by the seers, and since Trismegistus and Hystaspes and the Sibyls have foretold the same destinies, it is indisputable that all hope of life and salvation rests on the religion of God alone” (*Epitome Institutionum*, epilogue).[79] The apologetic function of the material could hardly be more patent.

A similar function can be found in the citation of the Sibyl in the forged Apostolic Constitutions: “But if the Gentiles laugh at us, and disbelieve our Scriptures, let at least their own prophetess Sibylla oblige them to believe, who says thus to them in express words:

> But when all things shall be reduced to dust and ashes
> And the immortal God who kindled the fire shall have quenched it
> God shall form those bones and that ashes into a man again,
> And shall place mortal men again as they were before.
> And then shall be the judgment, wherein God will do justice,
> And judge the world again. But as many mortals as have sinned through impiety
> Shall again be covered under the earth;
> But so many as have been pious shall live again in the world
> When God puts His Spirit into them, and gives those at once that are godly both life and favour
> Then shall all see themselves. (5.1.7)[80]

In a similar way Augustine declared in *The City of God* that the acrostic of book 8 was a genuine prophecy of Christ:

> It was at this same time, according to some accounts, that the Erythraean Sibyl made her predictions. Varro, we note, informs us that there were a number of Sibyls, not only one. This Sibyl of Erythraea certainly recorded some utterances which are obviously concerned with Christ…. This I discerned in conversations with that eminent man Flaccianus, who was, amongst other things, proconsul, a man of most ready eloquence and profound learning. We were talking about Christ, and he produced a Greek manuscript, saying that it was the poems of the Erythraean Sibyl. He showed me that in the manuscript the order of initial letters in one passage was so arranged as to form these words: IESOUS CHREISTOS

> THEOU UIOS SOTER, the translation of which is “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour. (City of God, 18.23)[81]

He then quotes the acrostic poem.

Altogether, according to the statistics compiled by B. Thompson in a short but extremely useful article on the subject,[82] twenty-two Patristic sources preserve some eight hundred lines of the oracles. Clement of Alexandria, for example, quotes them eleven times, amounting to forty-six lines; Theophilus quotes a large portion of book 3, *etc.*

That Christians were particularly interested in the Sibyl and in the forged prophecies that supported the claims and theological views of their faith is especially evident in the charges occasionally leveled against them by pagans, that they had interpolated their own words into her writings. The first time we find the charge is in the Ἀληθὴς Λόγος of Celsus. After telling the well-known story of the Stoic Epictetus, who removed himself so far from his own suffering that he calmly explained to his master that he should not have broken his leg, Celsus asks why Jesus, if he were so great, did not react similarly:

> What comparable saying did your God utter while he was being punished? If you had put forward the Sibyl, whom some of you use, as a child of God you would have had more to be said in your favour. However, you have had the presumption to interpolate many blasphemous things in her verses, and assert that a man who lived a most infamous life and died a most miserable death was a god. (7.53)[83]

Origen’s reply may have satisfied his Christian readers, but knowing what we do today about the composition of the Sibyllina Oracula, it seems, in fact, a bit wanting:

> Then for some unknown reason he wanted us to call the Sibyl a child of God rather than Jesus, asserting that we have interpolated many blasphemous things in her verses, though he does not give an instance of our interpolations. He would have proved this point had he showed that the older copies were purer and had not the verses which he supposes to have been interpolated. (7.56)

Although the charge of forgery is not found in (surviving) pagan attacks against

Christians, it is referred in several other Christian sources that counter these attacks. A half century after Origen, Lactantius could claim, “Some, refuted by these testimonies, are accustomed to have recourse to the assertion that these poems were not by the Sibyls, but made up and composed by our own writers” (*Institutions*, 4.15.26).[84] Even more striking is the extensive discussion by none other than the Christian Constantine, in his “Oration to the Assembly of the Saints,” preserved for us by Eusebius (assuming for the moment that the speech actually goes back to Constantine, an issue that does not much matter for my point).[85] The passage, though lengthy, deserves to be quoted in full, as it shows both the apologetic value of the Sibyl for the Christian cause and the pagan charge that the “predictions” in fact represented Christian forgeries:

> My desire, however, is to derive even from foreign sources a testimony to the Divine nature of Christ. For on such testimony it is evident that even those who blaspheme his name must acknowledge that he is God, and the Son of God if indeed they will accredit the words of those whose sentiments coincided with their own. The Erythraean Sibyl, then, who herself assures us that she lived in the sixth generation after the flood, was a priestess of Apollo, who wore the sacred fillet in imitation of the God she served, who guarded also the tripod encompassed with the serpent’s folds, and returned prophetic answers to those who approached her shrine; having been devoted by the folly of her parents to this service, a service productive of nothing good or noble, but only of indecent fury, such as we find recorded in the case of Daphne. On one occasion, however, having rushed into the sanctuary of her vain superstition, she became really filled with inspiration from above, and declared in prophetic verses the future purposes of God; plainly indicating the advent of Jesus by the initial letters of these verses, forming an acrostic in these words: Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, Cross. The verses themselves are as follows. (chs. 18–19)[86]

Constantine then provides a full quotation of the acrostic poem, and continues by refuting the charge of forgery:

> Many, however, who admit that the Erythraean Sibyl was really a prophetess, yet refuse to credit this prediction, and imagine that someone professing our faith, and not unacquainted with the poetic art, was the composer of these verses. They hold, in short, that they are a

> forgery, and alleged to be the prophecies of the Sibyl on the ground of their containing useful moral sentiments, tending to restrain licentiousness, and to lead man to a life of sobriety and decorum. Truth, however, in this case is evident, since the diligence of our countrymen has made a careful computation of the times; so that there is no room to suspect that this poem was composed after the advent and condemnation of Christ, or that the general report is false, that the verses were a prediction of the Sibyl in an early age. For it is allowed that Cicero was acquainted with this poem, which he translated into the Latin tongue, and incorporated with his own works.

Constantine, needless to say, was wrong about this.

Sibyllina Oracula as CounterForgeries

It is possible to see the Christian Sibylline Oracles—both those that survive (as interpolations of forgeries) and those quoted in patristic writers—not only as forgeries created for apologetic purposes, but specifically as counterforgeries. Among the weapons pagans used to oppose Christians were (forged) oracular pronouncements of their own, delivered with all the power of divine authority in the names, of course, of the pagan gods. And so, for example, Eusebius recounts an incident during the persecution of Maximin Daia, when a sheriff of Antioch named Theoctecnus forged an oracle to justify persecution of the Christians; he "displayed his magic arts by spurious oracular utterances…. This man aroused the demon against the Christians: the god, he said, had commanded 'the emperor's enemies,' to be cleared right out of the city and its neighborhood" (*H.E.* 9.2–3).

Years later Augustine could claim that pagan opponents of Christianity "thought up some sort of Greek verses, supposedly the effusions of a divine oracle, given to someone consulting it," which indicated that Jesus' disciple Peter "used sorcery to ensure that the name of Christ should be worshipped for 365 years, and that on the completion of that number of years it should come to an immediate end." Augustine readily exposes the false claim of the oracle: the allotted amount of time had passed already, and the church was thriving more than ever (*City of God* 18.53). Later, in the same source, Augustine discusses Porphyry's *ΕΚ ΛΟΓΙΩΝ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΣ,* which mentioned an oracle of Apollo against the Christians. Augustine proffers the expected objection: "Is anyone so dense as to fail to realize that these oracles were either the inventions of a

cunning man, a bitter enemy of the Christians, or the responses of demons devised with a like intent?” (19.23; see also 20.24 and 22.25).

If pagans were using forged oracles to oppose the Christians, is it any surprise that Christians responded in kind, by forging oracles of their own to defend themselves and their faith?[87] They could not forge oracles as having come from the gods of Greece and Rome, known to be either nonexistent or demonic. But an outlet existed in the person of the Sibyl, an actual human who went into a trance and under the power of inspiration delivered the truth of God. There is, in fact, a possible suggestion within the surviving Oracula Sibyllina themselves that Christians may have been inventing these texts as counterforgeries, in this case not against pagans but against Jews, who were known to have a good number of Sibylline oracles, as most of the surviving books derive ultimately from Jewish circles. The passage in question comes from Book 7:

> But they will endure extreme toil who, for gain
> Will prophesy base things, augmenting an evil time;
> Who putting on the shaggy hides of sheep
> Will falsely claim to be Hebrews, which is not their race.
> But speaking with words, making profit by woes,
> They will not change their life and will not persuade the righteous
> And those who propitiate God through the heart, most faithfully. (7.132–138)

Normally, the false “Hebrews” here are taken to be non-Jewish Christians of some kind. But might they, even more radically, be taken to be actual Jews, who, for Christians, were not in fact “true Jews,” because by rejecting Christ they had rejected their own God? As this book itself says, in further attacking Jews: “Ah, Coele-Syria,… wretched one, you did not recognize your God, whom once Jordan washed in its streams” (7.64–67). And so, it should be at least considered possible that the forger of this part of book 7 produced his Christian interpolation precisely as a counter to the Jewish Sibylline prophecies that he saw here before him, which needed to be “corrected” in line with true religion.

THE LETTERS OF PAUL AND SENECA

As a final example of apologetic forgeries, we might consider the letters allegedly exchanged by Paul and the Roman philosopher Seneca. There are fourteen letters in this famous correspondence, eight of them from Seneca to

Paul and six from Paul to Seneca. The first reference to the correspondence comes in Jerome's *De viris illustribus* (393 CE):

> Lucius Annaeus Seneca of Cordova, a disciple of the Stoic Sotion, and paternal uncle of the poet Lucan, was a man of very temperate life whom I would not place in a catalogue of saints, were it not that I was prompted to do so by those *Letters from Paul to Seneca* and *from Seneca to Paul* which are very widely read. In these, when Seneca was Nero's teacher and the most influential person of the period, he said that he wished to have the same position among his own [i.e., the pagans] which Paul had among the Christians. Two years before Peter and Paul were crowned with martyrdom, he was put to death by Nero. (*Vir. ill*. 12)[88]

Soon afterward Augustine mentions them: "Rightly did Seneca say, who lived at the time of the apostles, some of whose letters to the apostle Paul are still read" (*Epist*. 153. 14).[89] As A. Fürst notes, it is significant that the correspondence is not mentioned by Lactantius in the early fourth century.[90] This absence cannot simply be written off as an argument from silence; Lactantius frequently cites Seneca otherwise and highly evaluates him, and had he known of the letters, and thought them authentic, he scarcely could have failed to cite them. In any event, the terminus ante quem for their appearance is 392 CE and plausibly they date from some decades before that, so, say, middle of the fourth century.[91] They were certainly composed in Latin, given, among other things, Seneca's castigation of Paul for his feeble Latinity.

That Paul and Seneca would have exchanged letters may have seemed altogether plausible to the fourth-century forger who created the correspondence and to the reading audience that eagerly accepted his work as authentic. The two great figures were contemporaries; both of them died in Rome. Paul appeared before Seneca's own brother, Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, in one of his trial scenes in Acts (18:12–17). Moreover, when the historical Paul sent forth greetings from prison (in Rome?) to the Philippians, he includes a salutation from "those of Caesar's household" (4:22), which could include any number of people, including Nero's then advisor, Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Moreover, it has long been noted, classically by J. B. Lightfoot, that there are many clear parallels between the authentic writings of the two authors, especially in their teachings on ethics.[92] That the two would have corresponded with one another may have seemed likely to ancient Christian readers, even if it appears completely out of the question for modern scholars.

The Character and Emphases of the Letters

The letters are filled with various verisimilitudes, as can be seen simply from the way the correspondence begins in letter 1:

> Seneca to Paul, greeting. I believe that you have been informed, Paul, of the discussion which my friend Lucilius and I held yesterday concerning the apocrypha and other matters: for some of the followers of your teachings were with me. We had retired to the gardens of Sallust, and it was our good fortune that these disciples whom I have mentioned saw us there and joined us, although they were on their way elsewhere. You may be sure that we wished that you, too, had been present….[93]

Many of the letters from Seneca are filled with praise of Paul. This undoubtedly relates to the reason they were written in the first place. And so, for example, from letter 1: "when we had read your book… we were completely refreshed. These thoughts, I believe, were expressed not by you, but through you…. For they are so lofty and so brilliant with noble sentiments that in my opinion generations of men could hardly be enough to become established and perfected in them." Or from letter 7: "For the holy spirit that is in you and high above you expresses with lofty speech thoughts worthy of reverence … I confess that Augustus was affected by your sentiments…. He was amazed that one whose education had not been normal could have such ideas."

In turn, Paul, somewhat less than humbly, accepts Seneca's praise and intimates that it is fully deserved: "I count myself fortunate in the approval of a man who is so great. For you, a critic, a philosopher, the teacher of so great a ruler, nay even of everyone, would not say this unless you spoke the truth" (letter 2).

At the same time, although Seneca is awed by the content of Paul's writings, he is more than a little underwhelmed by his lack of rhetorical style: "I do wish you would obey me and comply with the pure Latin style, giving a good appearance to your noble utterances, in order that the granting of this excellent gift may be worthily performed by you" (letter 13). In letter 9 he indicates that he has sent his correspondent a "book on elegance of expression," presumably a Latin equivalent of Strunk and White, to help Paul along in his writing.[94]

The most frequently commented aspect of this correspondence is its almost complete lack of substance, otherwise. There is very little content to the letters. The one exception is letter 11, where there is, finally, a good bit of meaty

material and hints at courtly gossip, of a very serious nature. The letter discusses the fire in Rome and Nero's role in it. At the same time, because it is so different in conception, content, and style from the other letters, because it is dated out of sequence with the rest (occurring between letters dated 58 and 59 CE, even though it is given the date 64 CE), and because it has a completely different (negative) view of Nero from elsewhere in the correspondence, it is generally conceded to have come from another forger.[95] In any event, it provides the most "substance" of any of the letters. Seneca writes as follows:

> Do you think I am not saddened and grieved because you innocent people are repeatedly punished? Or because the whole populace believes you so implacable and so liable to guilt, thinking that every misfortune in the city is due to you?… The source of the frequent fires which the city of Rome suffers is plain … Christians and Jews, charged with responsibility for the fire—alas!—are being put to death, as is usually the case. The ruffian, whoever he is, whose pleasure is murdering and whose refuge is lying, is destined for his time of reckoning, and just as the best is sacrificed as one life for many, so he shall be sacrificed for all and burned by fire. One hundred thirty-two private houses and four thousand apartment-houses burned in six days; the seventh day gave respite.

The insipid character of the rest of the letters is the subject of frequent comment, as early as Erasmus: "I do not see how he could have made up these letters in a more feeble or inept fashion."[96] A nineteenth-century study by G. Boissier states: "Never has a clumsy forger made such great spirits speak more foolishly."[97] And the most recent lengthy analysis sums up the common view: "The noticeable peculiarity of the epistolary exchange between Seneca and Paul is the fact that content apparently does not matter; what matters are only the names of the correspondents."[98]

The Correspondence as Forgery

The Senecan correspondence was popular throughout the Middle ages; from the thirteenth century up to the sixteenth it was regularly included in the manuscripts of Seneca's writings. It has nonetheless been recognized as forged since the advent of historical criticism. Already Valla, in 1440, demonstrated its inauthenticity on stylistic grounds.[99] Erasmus, after commenting on the insipid

character of the writings, cited above, went on to say “nonetheless, whoever was the author, he wrote so as to persuade us that Seneca had been a Christian.”[100] Lightfoot expressed the matter with characteristic clarity: “The poverty of thought and style, the errors in chronology and history, and the whole conception of the relative positions of the Stoic philosopher and the Christian Apostle, betray clearly the hand of a forger.”[101] Only very few scholars, most of them Italian, have thought it possible that parts of the correspondence are authentic.[102]

But why would someone forge a set of letters with virtually no substance? We have seen another instance of the phenomenon in the Greek letter to the Laodiceans, and we would not be far afield to suspect that the reason for that cipher may apply to these as well: it was the fact of their existence that mattered, not the character of their contents. But that has not always been the explanation for the forged Senecan correspondence. For some time, the *opinio communis* was far more specific, as Harnack argued that the letters were produced for a concrete purpose, in order to commend Paul and his writings, or even the entire Bible, to recently converted fourth-century Christians of the educated classes, by showing an enthusiastic approbation by Seneca.[103] Fürst, however, shows the flaw in the reasoning: Seneca did not enjoy a high reputation among educated pagans of the fourth century, and his philosophy played virtually no role in the Neoplatonic thought world of late antiquity.[104]

An alternative was proposed by the editor of the first critical edition of the letters in 1938, Claude Barlow, who suggested that the simple, unadorned style of the letters indicates they may have originated as a rhetorical school exercise.[105] If they were that, however, one would have to judge that the student did not receive high marks, as the faux Senecan letters are striking precisely for their failure to approximate Seneca’s elegant style. But the fatal blow to the view, attractive as it is on first sight, is that school exercises in rhetoric were by their nature designed to say something, to invent an imaginary substance as the topic of correspondence. That is precisely what is lacking here.

A more promising, but ultimately failed, proposal was floated by Bernhard Bischoff, who produced the editio princeps of a Latin letter recently discovered, in which a certain Annas (allegedly) wrote to Seneca condemning idolatry and pagan religion generally. This is a letter, in other words, that advances a kind of Jewish apologia. In fact, according to Bischoff, the Annas named in its title is to be seen as none other than Annas II, Jewish high priest for a short time in 62 CE, and so a contemporary of Seneca. Bischoff maintained that the letter was actually written in the fourth century, and he ascribed it specifically to a Jewish author because there are (1) numerous parallels to the Wisdom of Solomon and

(2) no specific Christian content.[106]

According to Bischoff, the existence of this Jewish letter cannot be thought of as unrelated to the Christian correspondence, also involving Seneca. One of the works may well have served as a motivating factor for the production of the other. In his provocative summary, Bischoff states:

> Since the possibility cannot be excluded that either the Christian author of the Seneca/Paul letters knew the Annas epistle, or that the Jewish author was aware of that fictional correspondence, one of the two fictional writings might be a counter-move against the other side's attempt to let the philosopher appear in conjunction with a representative of its own faith. If one considers content, the Annas letter may be able to lay claim to priority, which would suggest a fourth century date for its origin.[107]

This view found wide acceptance soon after its publication, for example by Wolfgang Wischmeyer and even, with some minor revisions, the great Arnaldo Momigliano.[108] Eventually, however, A. Hilhorst showed that it was completely implausible. Hilhorst provided a new critical edition of the letter of Annas with text-critical and interpretive notes, and a brief discussion of its character and origin. On one hand, Hilhorst expressed skepticism over whether the letter was to be thought of as addressed, originally, to Seneca. The incipit that mentions Seneca is not followed by an epistolary opening. A forger creating a letter to Seneca would surely place his name in the text. Instead the letter is addressed to "the brothers." The title of the work is therefore a later addition to the text and tells us nothing about the original design of its author.

Even more than that, Hilhorst insisted that the letter appears to be Christian rather than Jewish. "Fratres" in the address indicates co-religionists, not potential converts. And the term is quite common in specifically Christian writings. In addition, one has to deal with a specific set of historical probabilities. The reality is that we do not have a single prose writing from antiquity, in Latin, written by a Jewish author.[109] What then is the likelihood that this one letter would be the exception, when nothing in the letter would prevent it from being seen as Christian? As Hilhorst states his case: "If I am right that there is no intrinsic evidence that the *Epistola* was written by a Jew any more than by a Christian, then it is reasonable to attribute this text to an environment in which all other a Latin writings of this kind originate, that is, Christianity."[110]

Hilhorst's view has been forcefully supported, with additional arguments by Rainer Jakobi,[111] who among other things points out that Christian authors such as Justin, Clement of Alexandria, and Lactantius made abundant use of the Wisdom of Solomon, that a number of the arguments of the letter can be found in the works of Christian writers, and that there do indeed appear to be Christian allusions in the text. In particular, the author appears to know Lactantius, the Vulgate, and the commentary on Isaiah by Jerome. All this provides us with the religious identity of the author and his date: the author is a Christian and he is writing after Jerome's commentary, that is, sometime soon after 410 CE.

More than that, the Annas of the incipit is not meant to be a reference to the high priest. The letter is allegedly by Annaei Senecae, created by someone already familiar with the Paul-Seneca correspondence. The letter is written to show that the great stoic philosopher had a highly enlightened view of religion and that he anticipated the attacks on pagan idolatry to be popularized by Christian apologists a century after his day.

If then the letters of Paul and Seneca can be explained adequately by none of the options cited above, we might return to the suggestion made earlier, which in fact is the most common view of the matter. The letters function—by the very fact that they exist—as a kind of Christian apologia. The background to their construction can plausibly be reconstructed as follows. It was widely "known" in the fourth century that there had been no connections between Paul and the great minds of his day ("knowledge" based on the available sources on Paul, such as the book of Acts and the various legends incorporated in the Acts of Paul). Moreover, his style of writing, and even the extent of his learning, were open to suspicion.[112] Naturally questions arose: Was the great apostle to the gentiles really so great? Why was he not more significant historically? Why was he not connected with other major thinkers of the time? Why are his writings not more weighty intellectually and polished stylistically? A forger produced the correspondence with Seneca to answer these questions, and very little substance was required to achieve that end. Paul was known and adored by the greatest philosopher of his day, who considered his ideas divinely inspired, all the more so since his inferior writing style showed that he did not learn his message through rigorous academic training. It must have come, then, straight from God. Even the Roman emperor was amazed at Paul's learning.

And so, as Stefan Krauter has recently observed, the letters of Paul and Seneca may seem insipid and disappointing to modern readers who hope to find some substance in them—for example, of the relationship of Stoic and Christian thought—or at least some good imperial gossip. But the letters should not be

criticized on these grounds. The various anachronisms and fissures of the correspondence are there simply because the author had little vested interest in doing anything other than showing that Paul and Seneca exchanged letters in which Paul was praised.[113] A similar view is taken by the most exhaustive recent analysis of Fürst:

> The text is crafted from conventions and phrases that are commonplace in late ancient epistolography. With these simple means, garnished with several splendid ideas, the author generates the one impression that was apparently his aim, namely that Seneca and Paul were supposedly friends…. The letters desire nothing further but to show by means of the chosen genre that Seneca and Paul had contact with one another.[114]

The driving force behind the association of Paul with Seneca in particular is that even though Seneca was not an important figure in pagan literary circles at the time,[115] he was indeed important to a range of Latin theologians, starting with Tertullian, who approvingly speaks of "Seneca saepe noster" (*De anima* 20.1), and moving through Lactantius up to Jerome, who numbered Seneca among the saints. His philosophy may have played little role in the development of Christian thought, but his person was considered important. So too with these letters: it is their existence as encomia on Paul, more than their contents, that matter.

The long-range effect was significant, for both Paul and Seneca. Paul hereafter was seen as closely connected with the greatest mind of his day, who praised him for his divinely inspired thought, and Seneca's status among Christians was elevated by his association with Paul. The letters came to be included as standard fare among the manuscripts of the writings of Seneca down to the invention of printing.

1. For recent works on the early Christian apologists, see Bernard Pouderon, *Les apologistes grecs du II^e. siècle* (Paris: de Cerf, 2005); and Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price, eds., *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Still worth reading as backdrop to the apologetic movement is the classic of Pierre de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne: étude sur la polémique antichrétienne du I^er au VI^e siècle* (Paris: L'artisan du Livre, 1934). For a recent, interesting attempt to limit the genre of the "apology" strictly, as a form introduced by Justin and perfected but brought to an end by Tertullian, see Sara Parvis, "Justin Martyr and

the Apologetic Tradition," in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, eds., *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), pp. 115–27. For my purposes here, "apologetic forgeries" refers not to forgeries necessarily in the literary form, or genre, of "apologia," but to forgeries that function apologetically.

2. Here I leave to the side the question of whether Christian apologiae were meant to convince outsiders, or to provide insiders with ammunition for their debates with others. I subscribe to the latter view, but the issue does not affect the questions I will be addressing throughout the chapter.

3. For earlier discussion of Acts, see pp. 263–82.

4. For an exception, see Acts 19.

5. See discussion on pp. 239–59.

6. See the discussion on pp. 350–58.

7. The bewildering array of long and explanatory titles found in the manuscripts include such niceties as "Narrative and History Concerning How the Very Holy Mother of God was Born for Our Salvation" (Tischendorf ms C); or "Narrative of the Holy Apostle James, the Archbishop of Jerusalem and Brother of God, Concerning the Birth of the All Holy Mother of God and Eternal Virgin Mary" (ms A). Our earliest manuscript, Bodmer V of the third or fourth century, simply calls it "The Birth of Mary, the Revelation of James."

8. See Edouard Cothenet, "Le Protévangile de Jacques: origen, genre et signification d'un premier midrash chrétien sur la Nativité de Marie," *ANRW* 2.25.6 (1988): 4252–69.

9. The book survives in some 150 Greek manuscripts and a range of eastern versions: Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, and Slavonic.

). *De perpetua virginitate beatae Mariae adversus Helvidium*.

. Letter 6 to Exuperius of Toulous 7.30.

!. See the extensive collations of manuscripts in two unpublished Duke University dissertations: B. Daniels, "The Greek Manuscript Tradition of the Protevangelium Jacobi" (1956); and George Zervos, "Prolegomena to a Critical Edition of the Genesis Marias (Protevangelium Jacobi): The Greek Manuscripts" (1986).

;. Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1958 [original 1897]), 2: 598–603.

l. Emile de Strycker, *La Forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1961).

i. Ronald Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1995). pp. 14–20.

6. Translations taken from Ehrman and Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 31–71.

7. Thus, in his commentary on the book, H. Smid states the obvious conclusion: "The author of PJ poses as James, the step(brother) of Jesus. The object of this identification is to make his story that of an eyewitness, able to complete the account in all 'necessary' points, on the basis of Matt 1 and 2 and Luke 1 and 2." Harm R. Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi: A Commentary* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1965), p. 168.

8. See, for example, Albert Frey, "Protévangile de Jacques," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, vol. 1, ed. François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), pp. 73–80; P. A. Van Stempvoort, "The Protevangelium Jacobi, the Sources of its Theme and Style and their Bearing on its Date," in SE, pp. 413–15; Cothenet, "Le Protévangelium," p. 4257; and Smid, *Protevangelium*, pp. 15–17: "It is probable that P.J. is a direct reply to the accusation of Celsus, at any rate to a similar indictment" (p. 16).

9. *A Virgin Conceived: Mary and Classical Representations of Virginity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 20.

0. Translations taken from Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*.

1. See the discussion in ibid. (p. 31, n. 3), in reference for example to Tosephta Hullin, 11.22–23. For a fuller listing of passages, see Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), pp. 534–37.

2. This is an option suggested, for example, by Cothenet (cf. Justin *Dialogue* 48), "Le Protévangile," p. 4257.

3. It is not altogether clear that Tertullian and the later heresiologists who deal with the matter are right to think that Marcion truncated Luke by eliminating the offensive opening two chapters. It is equally plausible that the text of Luke inherited by Marcion in the early second century lacked the chapters, and that they were added only later. But it was widely *thought* among the proto-orthodox that Marcion took his penknife to these chapters, and this is all that matters for the present argument.

4. For a supporter of this view, see John L. Allen, "The Protevangelium of James as an Historia: The Insufficiency of the Infancy Gospel Category." SBLSP 30 (1991): 508–17.

5. Although one could still imagine a specifically anti-Marcionite polemic, as the account makes plain that Jesus came into the world as a child born (in some sense) of Mary, not as an adult descended straight from heaven.

6. See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 362.

7. Translation from ibid.

8. On the use of διά to designate the letter carrier, see above, pp. 248–49.

9. R. A. Lipsius, “Der Märtyrertod Polykarps,” *ZWT* 17 (1874): 188–214.

0. Theodor Keim, *Aus dem Urchristenthum: geschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Zurich: Orell Fsli, 1878), pp. 126–32.

1. Ibid., p. 132.

2. Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, “Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polykarpmartyriums,” *SHAW. PH* (1957): 5–48.

3. E.g., H. I. Marrou in *TLZ* 84 (1959): 361–63.

4. “On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* in the History of Christianity,” *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 543.

5. B. Dehandschutter, “The Martyrium Polycarpi: A Century of Research,” *ANRW* 2.27. 1 (Berlin: New York: de Gruyter, 1993), p. 494.

6. See, e.g., ibid. Victor Saxer, “L’authenticité du ‘Martyre de Polycarpe’: Bilan de 25 ans de critique,” *Mélanges de l’école française de Rome. Antiquité* 94 (1982): 979–1001; Gerd Buschmann, *Martyrium Polycarpi—eine formkritische Studie. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung der Gattung Märtyrerakte*, BZNW 70 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 15–70.

7. “Polycarp of Smyrna and Ignatius of Antioch,” *ANRW* 2.27.1 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1993), pp. 353–54.

8. *Indagine sul martirio di San Policarpo: Critica storica e fortuna agiografica di un caso giudiziario in Asia Minore* (Nuovi Studi Storici, 6; Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1990).

9. See, for example, Dennis Trout in *Spec* 68 (1993): 251–53; T.D. Barnes, *JTS* 43 (1992): 237–38; and esp. Jan den Boeft and Jan Bremmer, “Notiunculae Martyrologicae V” *VC* 49 (1995): 146–64. Den Boeft and Bremmer in particular stress that the late date does not account for details in the text that make better sense with a second-century dating. They do not consider the possibility that such indicators of an early date could just as easily have been passed down orally in the accounts of Polycarp’s death, before the account was written many years later.

0. The first person recurs later in the account as well, in the adoration of the martyr’s relics, which I will address later.

1. *Pre-Decian Acts of Martyrs and Commentarii*, HDR, 22 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), p. 121.

2. Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts*.

3. Moss, “Dating,” pp. 549–50.

4. T. D. Barnes, “A Note on Polycarp,” *JTS* n.s. 18 (1967): 436.

5. “Dating,” p. 562.

6. “L’autenticité du Martyre de Polycarpe.”

7. Moss, “Dating,” p. 567.

8. Ibid., p. 566. Moss also argues that the text provides an “apologia for the absence of relics.” Strictly speaking, however, this is not true, since the bones in fact are the relics, even if the other parts of the body no longer survived.

9. See den Boeft and Bremmer in note 39.

0. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. He includes twenty-eight of the accounts that he considers “the most reliable” or at least “extremely important and instructive”; p. xii.

1. *Pre-Decian Acts*. Bisbee’s approach involves ascertaining whether some kind of (actual) historical commentarius lies behind each of the respective Acts.

2. There have occasionally been scholars who have wanted to claim that the famous persecution in Lyons and Vienne in the days of Marcus Aurelius was made up by an imaginative Christian author out of whole cloth. See, for example, James Westfall Thompson, “The Alleged Persecution of the Christians at Lyons in 177,” *AJT* 16 (1912): 359–84. The article was savaged by Harnack, *TLZ* 3 (1913): 74–77; and M. Paul Allard, *Revue des questions historiques* (1913): 53–67. Thompson attempted a lengthy and rather defensive response in *AJT* 17 (1913), 249–58. I will not provide an analysis here because, even though the account contains first-person narrative, it is not clear to me that this is an authorial ploy. Winrich Löhr, “Der Brief der Gemeinden von Lyon und Vienne (Eusebius, h.e. V, 1–2(4)),” *Oecumenica et patristica*, 1989, pp. 135–149, argues that the letter was not forged, but that it does contain literary elements to combine fact with fiction, in particular in an attempt to theologize the conflict as one between God and Satan, to stress the opposition to Montanism, and to create literary tension and drama and to highlight the character of those martyred, over against those who caved in.

3. “On the Origin of the Soul,” 1.12. Translation of Peter Holmes and Robert E. Wallis, *NPNF*, first series, vol. 5.

4. See, recently, J. N. Bremmer, “Perpetua and Her Diary: Authenticity, Family, and Visions,” in W. Ameling, ed., *Märtyrer und Märtyrerakten* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002), pp. 77–120.

5. Thomas J. Heffernan, “Philology and Authorship in the *Passio Sanctorum Perpetuae et Felicitatis,” Traditio* 50 (1995): 315–25.

6. Ibid., p. 320.

7. Ibid., p. 322.

8. See, for example, Ross Kraemer and Shira L. Lander, “Perpetua and Felicitas,”

in Philip Esler, ed., *The Early Christian World*, vol. 2, Routledge Worlds Series (London: Taylor & Francis, 2000), pp. 1048–65, who assert that there are “myriad” problems in the account, although they mention only a few. In particular, they note that the only contemporaneous evidence for Perpetua outside the Passio is Tertullian, who mentions her in passing and without referring to either a text or a commemoration; it is not, in fact, until the fourth century that text and commemoration are secured, starting with the liturgical Calendar of Rome in 354 and the comments of Augustine. Most striking are the parallels evidenced between the specifics of the Passio and the “prophecy” of Joel 2:28–29 (cf. Acts 2:17–18), where sons and daughters are said to prophesy, the spirit is poured out, the young see visions, and the old dream dreams.

9. Musurillo, *Christian Martyrs*, p. xxix. For a recent study, which deals with some of the problems of the eyewitness claims and the possibility that the account preserves some historical information, see E. Leigh Gibson, “Jewish Antagonism or Christian Polemic: The Case of the Martyrdom of Pionius,” *JECS* 9 (2001) 339–58.

0. Translation taken from Musurillo, *Christian Martyrs*.

1. Ibid., xxxv.

2. Translations taken from ibid.

3. Thus ibid., p. xxxv.

4. *Apostolic Fathers*, 2.2, 383–90.

5. As admitted by Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts*, pp. 146–49.

6. For these arguments, see Lightfoot and Bisbee, as cited in notes 64 and 41.

7. Translation taken from Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts*.

8. Translation of John J. Collins, “Sybilline Oracles,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *OTP*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1983).

9. See John J. Collins, “The Development of the Sibylline Tradition,” *ANRW* II.20.1 (1987): 421–59 and esp. H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy*, on which the following précis depends.

0. The textual tradition is complex. For this and all other “introduction” issues involving dating, redaction, and structure, see Collins, “Development.”

1. “Sibylline Oracles,” p. 332.

2. *Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina* (Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs, 190), pp. 38–46.

3. Collins, pp. 315–16.

4. Sodom represents Jerusalem in Rev. 11:8.

5. Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” pp. 408–9.

6. John G. Gager, “Some Attempts to Label the Oracula Sibyllina Book 7,” *HTR* 65 (1972): 91–97.

7. See pp. 34–35.

8. Translation of M. Dods, *ANF*, vol. 2.

9. Translation of E. H. Blakeney, *Firmiani Lactantii Epitome Institutionum Divinarum/Lactantius’ Epitome of the Divine Institutes* (London: SPCK, 1950), 123.

0. Translation of Collins, “Sybilline Oracles,” p. 322.

1. Translation of Henry Bettenson, *St Augustine, Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans* (Pengain Books, 1972), 788–89. All subsequent quotations of this work will come from this edition.

2. Bard Thompson, “Patristic Use of the Sibylline Oracles,” *RR* 16 (1952): 115–36.

3. Translation of H. Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, p. 440.

4. Translation of William Fletcher in *ANF*, vol. 7.

5. On the authenticity of the speech, see Hal Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 293:

> Its authenticity questioned during an earlier period of hypercriticism (during which scholars freely dismissed whole passages for not conforming to what their science told them the emperor should have said), it then became cautiously admitted as a representative piece of fourth-century propaganda, though still held unlikely to be Constantine’s own. Recent scholars have been more willing to concede authenticity, although the enthusiastic identification of parallels in other writers such as Lactantius was beginning to sound like yet another search for alternative authors until T. D. Barnes came to the sensible conclusion that words delivered by the emperor, no matter who wrote them, could safely be considered to be the emperor’s own.

I owe this reference to Maria Doerfler.

6. Translation of Ernest C. Richardson, *NPNF*, Second Series, vol. 1.

7. For other examples, including Diocletian’s appeal to the oracle of Didyma (Eusebius, *de vita Const*. 2.50–51; Lactantius, *De mort. pers*., 11.7), see Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 250–51.

8. Translation of Thomas Halton, *Saint Jerome: On Illustrious Men* (FC 100; Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1999), pp. 20–22.

). Translation mine.

). Alfons Fürst et al., *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), pp. 6–7.

.. A more precise date was unsuccessfully attempted by Édmond Liénard, who notes that there are many parallels between the correspondence and the letters of the Roman senator Quintus Aurelius Symmachus (345–402 CE). Liénard argues, then, that the letters were written just a few years before Jerome attests to their existence. “Sur la Correspondance Apocryphe de Sénèque et de Saint-Paul,” *RBPH* 11 (1932): 5–23. Fürst has demonstrated the problem with this line of argumentation: the letters, in fact, have numerous points of contact and parallels with a good number of other fourth-century letter writers as well, and simply conform in many ways to the rhetorical conventions of the time (*Der apocryphe Briefwechsel*, pp. 7–8).

:. See Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1869), pp. 268–331.

}. Translations taken from Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*.

I. There exists some evidence that highly trained pagan authors generally considered Paul’s letters a bit barbaric. See Zahn, *Geschichte* 2, 2, 620–21; Harnack *Geschichte*, 1, 763–65; E. Bickel, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der römischen Literatur* 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1961), 15.226–27.

;. Thus, most recently, Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, p. 112.

;. “His epistolis non video quid fingi possit frigidius aut ineptius,” *Epistola* 2092.

'. “Jamais plus maladroit faussaire n’a fait plus sottement parler d’aussi grands esprits.” G. Boissier, “Le Christianisme de Sénèque,” *Revue des deux mondes* 92 (1871): 43. I owe this reference to my student Pablo Molina.

}. “Die auffällige Eigenheit des Briefwechsels zwischen Seneca und Paulus ist die, dass es in ihm offenbar gar nicht um Inhalte geht, sondern um die Namen der Korrespondenten und nur um diese”; Fürst, *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel*, p. 11.

). L. D. Reynolds and H. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 142.

)0. “et tamen quisquis fuit auctor, hoc egit ut nobis persuaderet Senecam fuisse Christianum.”

)1. *Philippians*, p. 271.

)2. See Ilaria Ramelli, “L’epistolario apocrifo Seneca-san Paolo: alcune osservazioni,” *VetChr* 34 (1997): 299–310.

)3. Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*,

vol. 1 (Lepizig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1893), p. 765; see also Theodore Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* II/2 (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1892), p. 621.

04. Fürst, *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel*, p. 17.

05. Claude Barlow, *Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam (quae vocantur*) (Horn, Austria: F. Berger, 1938).

06. “Der Brief des Hohenpriesters Annas an den Philosophen Seneca—eine jüdisch-apologetische Missionsschrift (Viertes Jahrhundert?),” in *Anecdota Novissima: Texte des vierten bis sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*. (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1984), pp. 1–9.

07. “Da nicht auszuschließen ist, daß entweder dem christlichen Verfasser der Seneca-Paulus-Briefe die Annas-Epistel oder dem jüdischen Autor jene fiktive Korrespondenz bekannt war, kann eine der beiden Fiktionen ein Gegenzug gegen den Versuch der anderen Seite sein, den Philosophen in Verbindung mit einem Repräsentanten ihrers Glaubens erscheinen zu lassen. Wägt man den Inhalt ab, so dürfte die Priorität bei dem Annas-Brief liegen, was für seine Entstehung im IV. Jahrhundert sprechen würde”; P. 5.

08. Wolfgang Wischmeyer, “Die Epistula Anne ad Senecam: Eine jüdische Missionsschrift des lateinischen Bereichs,” in *Juden und Christen in der Antike,* ed. J. Van Amersfoort and J. van Oort (Kampen: Kok, 1990), pp. 72–93; Arnaldo Momigliano, “The New Letter by ‘Anna’ to ‘Seneca’” *Athenaeum* n.s. 63.1–2 (1985): 217–19. For Momigliano, the author of the letter was indeed a Jew. But, he points out, even though the incipit mentions Seneca, the letter itself is addressed to fratres. The name Seneca is therefore a “secondary interpolation” possibly made by a Jewish editor; the edited form of the letter then became the incentive for a somewhat later Christian writer to forge the correspondence of Paul and Seneca.

09. A. Hilhorst notes that there are some Jewish inscriptions in Latin that survive, but they almost never demonstrate any literary pretensions. “The *Epistola Anne ad Senecam:* Jewish or Christian?” in G. J. M. Bartelink et al., ed., *Eulogia*. Festschrift A. A. R. Bastiansen (Steenbrugge: Abbatia S. Petri, 1991), pp. 147–61.

0. P. 161. It should be noted that this argument could be circumvented if it were shown that the letter is a Latin translation of a Greek original; but there appears to be no evidence that this is the case.

1. *Die sogenannte ‘Epistula Anne ad Senecam*’ (Torun: Wydawn, Uniwersytetu Mikolaja Kopernika, 2001).

2. On his style, see note 94 above.

3. Stefan Krauter, “Was ist ‘schlechte’ Pseudepigraphie? Mittel, Wirkung und Intention von Pseudepigraphie in den Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam,” in Jörg Frey et al., eds., *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion*, pp. 765–85

4. Der Text ist gebastelt aus Konventionen und Phrasen, wie sie in der spätantiken Epistolographie gang und gäbe sind. Mit diesen schlichten Mitteln, garniert mit einigen famosen Einfällen, erzeugt der Autor den einzigen Eindruck, der offenbar vermittelt werden soll, dass nämlich Seneca und Paulus Freunde gewesen sein sollen.... Die Briefe wollen nichts weiter, als mittels der gewählten Gattung demonstrieren, dass Seneca und Paulus miteinander Kontakt hatten”; *Der apocryphe Briefwechsel*, pp. 3, 12.

5. See p. 523 above.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Lies and Deception in the Cause of Truth

I have come to the end of my study and can now summarize my findings in a few words. I will then conclude by examining the one major issue I have not yet addressed at any length. Throughout the study we have seen that forgery was widely considered a form of literary deceit. But we have not considered the ethics of the practice. In the early Christian tradition, were there circumstances in which literary deceit may have been considered acceptable? That is to say, how would forgery have been evaluated in early Christianity as a moral, or immoral, practice?

SUMMARY AND EXPLANATION OF OUR FINDINGS

Arguably the most striking finding of my study is the most basic. In the early centuries of the church Christians produced a large number of literary forgeries. We have considered some fifty examples from the first four Christian centuries. Many of these are highly significant historically and culturally. Among the earliest surviving writings of the Christians—those that make up the New Testament—nearly half (13/27) are forged.[1]

I have restricted my study, with only a couple of minor exceptions, to the forgeries that have survived in manuscript tradition and that are tied closely to the polemical agendas of the early Christians in their various internecine and extramural struggles. We know, of course, of other forgeries that do not survive but that were, at one time, known and discussed.[2] Moreover, toward the end of our period forgeries continued apace, especially with the sea-change that came with the conversion of Constantine and the proliferation of writings of all sorts among Christian intellectuals. Sometimes these later forgeries involved shenanigans connected with important figures in the theological and ecclesiastical life of the church of the fourth century. Such is the case with a no-longer surviving letter forged for unfriendly purposes in the name of Athanasius, as he himself tells us in a letter he wrote to Constantius in opposition to Arian opponents:

> I am sure you will be astonished at the presumption of my enemies. Montanus, the officer of the Palace, came and brought me a letter, which

> purported to be an answer to one from me, requesting that I might go into Italy, for the purpose of obtaining a supply of the deficiencies which I thought existed in the condition of our Churches. Now I desire to thank your Piety, which condescended to assent to my request, on the supposition that I had written to you, and has made provision for me to undertake the journey, and to accomplish it without trouble. But here again I am astonished at those who have spoken falsehood in your ears. … For I never wrote to you, nor will my accuser be able to find any such letter. (*Apol. ad const*. 19)[3]

Years later, Jerome describes a malicious letter, no longer extant, written to castigate his intentions in performing his translation work:

> My brother Eusebius writes to me that, when he was at a meeting of African bishops which had been called for certain ecclesiastical affairs, he found there a letter purporting to be written by me, in which I professed penitence and confessed that it was through the influence of the press in my youth that I had been led to turn the Scriptures into Latin from the Hebrew; in all of which there is not a word of truth. When I heard this, I was stupefied.… Letters were soon brought me from many brethren in Rome asking about this very matter, whether the facts were as was stated: and they pointed in a way to make me weep to the person by whom the letter had been circulated among the people. He who dared to do this, what will he not dare to do? It is well that ill will has not a strength equal to its intentions. Innocence would be dead long ago if wickedness were always allied to power, and calumny could prevail in all that it seeks to accomplish. It was impossible for him, accomplished as he was, to copy any style and manner of writing, whatever their value may be; amidst all his tricks and his fraudulent assumption of another man's personality, it was evident who he was. It is this same man, then, who wrote this fictitious letter of retractation in my name, making out that my translation of the Hebrew books was bad, who, we now hear, accuses me of having translated the Holy Scriptures with a view to disparage the Septuagint.… I wonder that in this letter he did not make me out as guilty of homicide, or adultery or sacrilege or parricide or any of the vile things which the silent working of the mind can revolve within itself.[4] (*Adv. Rufin. 2, 24*)

Examples could be multiplied.[5]

In addition to restricting myself to works that survive, I have focused on just one kind of early Christian forgery, those written in the context of early Christian polemics—whether internal struggles among various Christian groups trying to establish, in the face of opposing views, what Christians should believe or how they should live, attacks on Jews and Judaism, or apologia in the face of pagan assault. I have not considered non-polemical forgeries, and so have left out of our examination, for example, a number of Nag Hammadi treatises such as the Apocryphon of John, The Gospel of Philip, or the two Apocalypses of James. These do indeed use a pseudonym to advance a particular understanding of the religion (and to that extent are obviously arguing against alternative perspectives), but they are not especially polemical in their content or rhetoric.

As it turns out, however, the majority of our early Christian forgeries do in fact appear to have been generated out of a polemical context. The reason has to do with much larger issues in the development of the Christian religion, which I will mention here in only very brief compass. As is widely recognized, Christianity—by which I mean all the various groups of devotees who paid allegiance to Christ in one way or another, and considered themselves to be his followers—was distinctive in the Roman world in a number of ways. As opposed to followers of other religions, most Christian groups were exclusivistic in their views, maintaining that they had the "true" understanding of the faith (whether they were Sethian, Valentinian, Thomasine, Marcionite, Ebionite, Proto-orthodox, or something else), and that knowing the truth was in fact the key to practicing true religion. Christians ("true" Christians of whatever variety) were right, and everyone else was in error. Conversion was required, and conversion meant abandoning one's old religion, whether that was some form of Judaism, one of the many hundreds (thousands) of "pagan" cults, an "aberrant" Christian sect, *etc.* A person had to believe the "right" things to be on the right side of God, from the very beginning of the Christian movement.

If being right mattered, then accepting the right teachings mattered. But how was one to know the right teachings when there were so many alternative views available, not just within the Christian movement, but competing with it from the outside? Authorities were needed. Authorities who could speak the truth from God. And so there developed the notion of apostolic succession. God sent Christ, who chose his apostles, who spoke the truth and passed it along to their hand-selected successors. But what happens when Christianity spread, and there were very few people left who actually knew the successors of the apostles? In one strain of thought, apostolic succession was carried down to and through the

bishops of the main churches, who could be trusted to convey the apostolic teachings learned from Jesus who was sent from God. Another way to get back to the apostles was by reading the writings they had produced. Apostolic writings then became the order of the day. Even apostles of Jesus who, in real life, could not have written a paragraph in Greek had their souls depended upon it—Simon Peter, James the brother of Jesus, and John the Son of Zebedee, for example—had writings attributed to them. Many of these writings were produced by later authors who could not possibly have had any real connection with the apostles. They wrote forgeries, but they did so no doubt—at least in their own views—for good causes. The apostolic truth needed apostolic authority, and that required the use of an apostolic name. This was deceit in service of the truth.

Later still, other (non-apostolic) Christian leaders came to be cherished as authority figures: Clement of Rome, for example, or Ignatius of Antioch, and eventually Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom. And so sundry authors claimed those names as well for their own writings, lying about their identities to get their views heard. It happened a lot.

That, then, is one set of theses that I have tried to establish in the preceding chapters. Forgery occurred to a notable extent and it involved both well-known names and historically important writings, including a large number that became Scripture. As subsidiary theses I have tried to show that explanations for the phenomenon that at times seem ubiquitous, especially among Neutestamentlers, lack compelling evidence and are almost certainly wrong. This includes the claim that it was common practice in philosophical schools for students to write treatises in the names of their teachers, with impunity, as an act of humility, and the assertion that letters written in the names of such stalwarts as Peter and Paul can best be explained as having been produced by secretaries or coauthors, rather than the apostles themselves.

One other overarching conclusion is the corollary: forgery was indeed understood in antiquity to be a form of lying and deceit. This is seen not only in the negative terms used to describe writings produced by an author falsely claiming to be someone else, such as νόθα (bastards) and ψευδεπίγραφα (writings inscribed with a lie). It is also seen in the extensive discourse surrounding the activity, which castigated it as a form of lying. The true nature of these false writings was clearly recognized, as we have seen, by the greatest scholar of ancient forgery, Wolfgang Speyer, in words that bear repeating: “Every forgery feigns a state of affairs that does not correspond to actual events. In this vein, forgery belongs in the realm of lie and deceit.” … “Only where the intent to

deceive—that is to say: dolus malus—exists, does [a work] attain to the status of forgery. Forgery thus belongs in the same category as the lie, indeed as the intentional lie."[6]

I should stress again that forgery is not—and was not–simply an ancient form of transparent "fiction." The authors of forgery in almost every known instance meant to deceive their readers and the vast majority of times they appear to have succeeded. And so, "fiction" is not at all the right designation for this kind of practice.[7] Both in antiquity and today "fiction,"[8] involves a kind of contract between the author and the reader, in which the requirement of factual reporting is, by mutual assent, suspended. To revert to the helpful explanation of Michael Wood:

> Fiction is pure invention, any sort of fabrication. It is invention which knows it is invention; or which knows *and says* it is invention; or which, whatever it knows and says, *is known* to be invention. It is permissible or noble lying, licensed under quite specific cultural circumstances, and displays (sometimes) the linguistic or textual marks of its license. It is not lying at all, but exempt from all notions of truth and falsehood, licensed in quite a different way. …[9]

That is not what we are dealing with when considering forgeries. The reports of and discussions about the practice in antiquity consistently show that in fact there was no agreement between author and reader for the assumption of a false name. Instead, forgery was seen as a form of lying meant to deceive. As such it was closely related to other literary practices that we have mentioned only in passing throughout this study[10]: plagiarism,[11] falsification,[12] fabrication,[13] and false attribution.[14]

It is important at this stage to stress that even though I have insisted throughout the study that forgery is a form of literary deception, only in passing, at the outset, have I addressed the question of whether or not this kind of lying was ever considered morally acceptable. That, of course, is a different issue altogether.

Any normative evaluation of literary deceit should be the work of ethicists or, possibly, theologians—not historians. But the historian does have the obligation to consider how such activities would have been perceived in their own day. As it turns out, the (ancient) moral evaluation of lying is complicated, as might be expected when dealing with Christian authors who urge their readers to tell the

truth, after lying about their own identity.[15] To make sense of this situation we need to consider the attitudes to lying and deception in the early church.

LIES AND DECEPTION IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The question about whether lies could be deemed moral was entertained by Speyer:

> As noted already, it is the intent to deceive that lies beyond any particular literary purpose that makes a pseudepigraphon a forgery. Forgery and lie agree in this regard, that they conceal the real situation and give the appearance of truth to a non-existent state of affairs. To this end, they use the means of dissimulation. Literary forgery is thus a special case of the lie, or rather: of deceit. This relationship between literary forgery and lie does not appear, however, to have been examined closely in antiquity or the modern era.… We must ask, however, whether in antiquity any lie would have been judged unethical, or whether there were differentiations, and deception was considered permissible in certain cases.[16]

To ask what ancient persons—even orthodox Christians among the highly educated literary elite—thought about lying would be like asking this question of modern people. It depends on whom you ask. For the purposes of this sketch, I will map out two of the extreme positions, the well-known Augustinian view that it was never, ever right to lie, about anything, at any time, for any reason, whatsoever, and the lesser known but (at the time) more popular view represented by his contemporary John Cassian, that in fact there were instances where lying was not only acceptable but in fact the right thing to do.[17]

Augustine's Views of Lying

Augustine's views of lying can be found scattered throughout his writings, but come to clearest expression in his two treatises devoted to the subject, *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium.*[18] The overarching point is the same in both treatises: under no circumstances is it permissible for a Christian to lie. You can imagine the most extreme position you want—that a white lie may prevent someone from being raped and tortured to death—and it is still not right to lie,

no matter what.

De mendacio and Contra mendacium

De mendacio provides a long and nuanced discussion of what a lie actually is, followed by the question of whether it is ever appropriate or permissible for a Christian to tell a lie. For Augustine, a lie is the intentional discrepancy between what a person thinks to be true (whether or not she is right) and the contrary thing she says. A person "lies … who holds one opinion in his mind and who gives expression to another through words or any other outward manifestation" (ch. 3).[19] As Paul Griffiths puts it, for Augustine the mark of a *mendacium* is duplicity: that is, "a fissure between thought and utterance that is clearly evident to the speaker as she speaks. Lying words are spoken precisely with the intent to create such a fissure." So the speaker of the lie, the *mendax* has to believe that what she is saying is false, and to be intentionally saying it anyway (whether or not it really is false is beside the point).[20] Or more simply: "For Augustine, the lie is deliberately duplicitous speech, insincere speech that deliberately contradicts what its speaker takes to be true."[21]

Augustine is well aware of instances in the Bible where important figures lie with apparent approbation: Sarah and Jacob in Genesis, the Egyptian midwives at the beginning of Exodus. But he insists that these passages demand a figurative, not a literal, interpretation; and he finds no lies among Jesus or his followers in the New Testament. In his view, not only is there no biblical warrant for lying; there is no warrant whatsoever. He gets to this point by a kind of argumentum ad absurdum: no one would commend fornication in order to attain a greater good; and lying is condemned in Scripture just as much as fornication. One should not try to imagine a hypothetical situation in which a lie would ever bring about the ultimate, greatest good possible—for example, the eternal life of another. For one who proclaims the gospel with a lie undercuts the truth of the gospel, and if a person cannot trust a Christian who is telling a lie for the sake of his salvation, then he would have no grounds for trusting him with respect to the message of salvation itself: "When regard for truth has been broken down or even slightly weakened, all things will remain doubtful, and unless these are believed to be true, they cannot be considered as certain" (ch. 17). "When all aspects of the problem of lying have been considered, it is clear that the testimony of the Holy Scriptures advises that one should never lie at all" (ch. 42). "Whoever thinks, moreover, that there is any kind of lie which is not a sin deceives himself sadly when he considers that he, a deceiver of others, is an honest man" (ch. 42).

Augustine's hard line continues in the *Contra mendacium*. This tractate was occasioned by a somewhat unusual situation. The heretical Priscillians had argued that lies were sometimes not only acceptable, but commendable. An orthodox leader, Consentius, was willing to pretend to accept Priscillian teachings (a kind of lie) in order to infiltrate the group and expose them as heretics. For Augustine, even such commendable ends do not justify the use of deception. As he asks rhetorically, "Therefore, how can I suitably proceed against lies by lying?" (ch. 1). Augustine goes on to maintain that if duplicitous concealment were licit, Christ would have told his sheep to dress in wolves' clothing, so as to discover the wolves; instead, they are told to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing (ch. 12). For Augustine, the teaching of Scripture is plain: God will destroy *all* who lie, not just some (see Psalm 5:6–7).

Moreover, if lying were ever appropriate, the martyrs to the faith would have been completely justified in lying to avoid torture and death. But they did not lie, for they realized that something is far worse than temporary torture and physical death: it is eternal torment and spiritual death, which comes to all those who willfully sin (ch. 3). And so, for Augustine, "Of course, it makes a difference for what reason, for what end, with what intention anything is done. But, those things which are clearly sins ought not to be done under any pretext of a good reason, for any supposedly good end, with any seemingly good intention" (ch. 18). His ultimate conclusion:

> You must hold and firmly defend the contention that in matters of divine religion we ought never to lie at all. Just as we do not seek out hidden adulterers by adultery or homicides by homicide or sorcerers by sorcery, so we should not seek out liars by lying or blasphemers by blasphemy. (ch. 41)

Similar Perspectives

It is sometimes overlooked that Augustine needed to argue so vociferously for his position on lying precisely because most Christians took a different view. As Griffiths points out, Augustine may have been the first thinker in the Christian religion to give a systematic treatment of the two big questions about lying: what a lie is, and whether it is ever permissible. But "few Christians agreed with him when he wrote."[22]

There were some who did, however. And so, Lactantius, writing against the poet Lucilius, who implied that whereas one should never lie to one's friends, it

was acceptable to lie to one's enemies, could state:

> The other things which the worshiper of God ought to observe are easy when those virtues have been attained. For he would never lie for the sake of deceiving or harming. It is wrong for him who is eager for the truth to be false in any respect and to depart from that very truth which he follows. In this way of justice and of all virtues, there is no place for a lie.… Nor will he ever commit the crime of having his tongue, "the interpreter of the mind," at variance with his feeling and intention.[23]

So too Eusebius, in the *Preparatio:*

> A mortal man who paid any little regard to virtue would never lie but would choose rather to reverence the truth; nor would he lay the blame of a lie upon any necessity of fate or course of the stars. But even if anyone were to bring fire or sword against his body, to compel him to pervert the word of truth, yet even against this he would reply in freedom's tone:
>
> "Come fire, come sword;
> Burn, and scorch up this flesh, and gorge thyself
> With my dark blood; for sooner shall the stars
> Sink down to earth, and earth rise up to heav'n
> Than fawning word shall meet thee from my lips." (6.6)[24]

John Cassian's Alternative Perspective

This hard-core view of lying as never, ever permissible ran up against a much more popular view, embraced by non-Christian and Christian authors alike, that there were indeed circumstances under which it was not only permissible but commendable to engage in lies and other forms of deceit. As Speyer and, especially, Norbert Brox have recognized, this ancient Christian attitude may well explain the willingness of many anonymous literati to forge documents in the names of others, lying about their identity in order to convey what they understood to be the truth.[25] This contrary view can be seen in a relatively clear form in a key passage of John Cassian's *Conferences*, in which he recounts a late

sleepless night conversation in the desert between Abba Germanus and Abba Joseph (the words are those of Joseph; they appear to represent Cassian's own view as well, but whether they do or not is immaterial to the point).

Abba Joseph insists that it is sometimes the right thing to do to lie, but one must use supreme caution and circumspection:

> And so a lie is to be thought of and used as if it were hellebore. If it is taken when a deadly disease is imminent it has a healthful effect, but taken when there is no urgent need it is the cause of immediate death. For we read that even men who were holy and most approved by God made such good use of lying that they not only did not commit sin thereby but even acquired the highest righteousness. If deceit were capable of conferring glory on them, would truth, on the other hand, have brought them anything but condemnation?[26]

Joseph cites the story of Rahab from the book of Joshua. Had she spoken the truth when asked where the Israelite spies were hiding, they could not have done her a favor later, and spared her family or her, and she would never, then, have become one of the progenitors of Christ himself (in fact, the messianic line then would have been broken). Contrast that with Delilah who disastrously spoke the truth and as a result "obtained everlasting perdition in exchange for this, and left to everyone nothing but the memory of her sin." Joseph's conclusion: "When some grave danger is connected with speaking the truth, therefore, the refuge of lying must be resorted to (yet in such a way that we are bitten by the healthful guilt of a humbled conscience.)" But that is acceptable before God, who ""perceives the inner devotion of the heart and judges not the sound of the words but the intent of the will, because it is the end of the work and the disposition of the doer that must be considered." In sum: "One person can be justified even when lying, whereas another can commit a sin deserving everlasting death by telling the truth."

A sharper contrast to the Augustinian view can scarcely be imagined (except one that insisted that lying was *always* the moral thing!). But Cassian was not inventing an ethics of lying out of whole cloth. On the contrary, he was standing in a long and noble line of ethical thinking that can be traced back for centuries. In pagan circles, it is most famously associated with the great Socrates himself.[27]

Pagan Advocacy for the Lie

According to Xenophon, Socrates taught that there were certain situations in which lying was not only permissible but appropriate. This is the case, for example, when a general "seeing that his army is downhearted, tells a lie and says that reinforcements are approaching, and by means of this lie checks discouragement among the men." So too, in a yet better known and much repeated example, lying is proper if "a man's son refuses to take a dose of medicine when he needs it, and the father induces him to take it by pretending that it is food, and cures him by means of this lie" (*Memorab*. 4, 2, 14–18).[28] This idea of a "medicinal" lie became a commonplace in ancient ethical discourse. It recurs on Socrates's lips in Plato's "Republic."

Plato's own views of lying, as with most of his views on most things, are very difficult to ascertain, given the nature of his dialogues and the logic of his dialectical methods. But the various positions championed at one point or another in the dialogues—whether they are the historical Plato's actual views or others' that he sees either as false or only as partly true—are almost always views that were seen as "acceptable" to some of his ancient Greek readers.

There is a good deal of discourse on lying in the "Republic." For example, at 382c-d, Socrates declares that it is acceptable to lie to one's enemies, to one's friends in order to prevent them from doing harm to themselves, and in fables and myths designed to lead a person to the truth. Best known, however, is Socrates's proposal of the "noble lie" that was to help sustain the proper leadership and ordered society of his Republic. In building his case for the noble lie, Socrates begins by insisting that lying is sometimes the proper thing to do, with recourse to the idea of the medicinal lie:

> But further we must surely prize truth most highly. For if we were right in what we were just saying and falsehood is in very deed useless to gods, but to men useful as a remedy or form of medicine, it is obvious that such a thing must be assigned to physicians, and laymen should have nothing to do with it" [and who, for Plato, are the "physicians" who can dole out the medicinal lie? The enlightened rulers of the state, who are all trained in philosophy]. "The rulers then of the city may, if anybody, fitly lie on account of enemies or citizens for the benefit of the state: no others may have anything to do with it." (389b)[29]

Somewhat later, in a summary statement, Socrates reiterates: "It seems likely that our rulers will have to make considerable use of falsehood and deception for the benefit of their subjects" (459c-d). The noble lie itself is spelled out in 414–

15. In this utopian Republic, the philosopher-kings who are the leaders need to propagate the lie that everyone in the state was formed within the earth by God, some of them with gold intermixed with their characters (these would be the ones appointed by God to be the rulers), others with silver (their helpers), and yet others, the majority, with brass or iron. On no account can a ruler have a mixture of brass or iron in his constitution.

As a kind of control over society, then, the rulers claim that they are inherently suited—made by God—to be rulers, and the artisans and farmers and the like, that is, the majority of the people, have been made with inferior characters. These then must be ruled by others of superior nature. The irony is that for Plato, this "lie" actually conveys the "truth." There really are some people who are constituted to be leaders: the philosophers who are able to sustain the hard training of dialectical reasoning so as to come to see the "truth." No one else can rule in the ideal state. And so, as Christopher Gill has stressed, "The noble lie is properly described as a 'lie' because what is involved is deliberate non-veracity; but the lie is clearly designed to propagate an idea which the argument presents as true, namely that each member of the ideal state should be placed in the class for which he or she is naturally suited." For Plato, says Gill, "lying, as in the case of the noble lie, may be the most effective way to propagate truth."[30]

The idea that there could be occasions when lies and other forms of deceit were legitimate is attested throughout the writings of pagan authors, often showing up in unexpected places, as in the "Philoctetes" of Sophocles, where Odysseus tries to convince Neoptolemus to take Philoctetes by deceit, since otherwise it would be impossible. Neoptolemus asks, "Then you think it brings no shame to speak what is false?" And Odysseus replies, "No, not if the falsehood yields deliverance" (II. 108–09).[31] Centuries later Cicero can state with mild approbation that "rhetoricians are allowed to lie in their historical presentations" (*Brutus* 11.42). In a sharply contrasting context Heliodorus celebrates the virtue of the helpful lie, "For lying is good when it benefits those who speak the lie and does no harm to those who hear it" (*Ethiopica*, 1.26.6,).

Christian Advocacy of the Lie

What matters most for our purposes is that there was also a widespread Christian discourse, which Augustine found deeply irritating, that advocated the appropriate use of lies and deceit, in certain circumstances.

The Insistence on the Truth

As might naturally be expected, early Christian sources are full of exhortations to speak the truth. The author of Ephesians, as we have seen, can urge his readers: “Let each of you put aside the lie and speak the truth with his neighbor” (Eph. 4:25). I have already mentioned the irony, to be dwelt on at greater length in a moment, that this injunction occurs in a letter whose author lied about his own identity. The same irony occurs in the equally pseudonymous letter to the Colossians: “Do not lie to one another” (Col. 3.9). After the New Testament period comes a host of injunctions not to lie. In the orthonymous *Shepherd* of Hermas, for example, the following brief exchange appears between the Shepherd and Hermas:

> Then he spoke to me again, “Love the truth and let all truth come from your mouth … For the Lord is true in his every word, and there is no lie in him. And so, those who lie reject the Lord and defraud him, not handing over to him the deposit they received. For they received from him a spirit that does not lie; if they return it to him as a liar, they defile the commandment of the Lord and become defrauders.” (Commandments, 3.1–2)

So too Justin, allegedly writing to the emperor, points out: “You can be sure that we have spoken these things for your benefit, since we, when on trial can always deny [that we are Christians]. But we do not desire to live by lying” (1 *Apol*. 8.2). This, as we have seen, is a view later picked up by Augustine, who pointed out that the martyrs were a clear proof that it is never right to lie in order to reap a greater benefit, such as avoiding torture.

The Virtue of the Lie

Even though it is a “given” that Christian ethical teachings insisted on the truth, there are a startling number of authors who share the view of Cassian’s Abba Joseph, that it is also sometimes a good thing to lie. We might start with Clement of Alexandria, who insists that the true “Gnostic” tell the truth but makes an exception for the so-called medicinal lie: “For [the Gnostic] both thinks and speaks the truth; unless at any time, medicinally, as a physician for the safety of the sick, he may deceive or tell an untruth, according to the Sophists” (*Strom*. 7.9).[32] That Clement does not see this simply as a bit of sophistry is evident from what follows. The apostle Paul was known, according to Clement, to have used deceit in two circumstances, when he circumcised Timothy after declaring that

“circumcision made with hands profits nothing” and when he occasionally took upon himself the burdens of the Jewish Law in order to win Jews over to the faith, so that he, “accommodating himself to the Jews, became a Jew that he might gain all.” Elsewhere, again, Clement uses the physician analogy to justify the use of deception (*Strom*. 7.53).

Origen, not surprisingly, argues in a similar vein. In the *Contra Celsum* he notes that Celsus had accused the Christians of making God a purveyor of deceit by coming to earth in the (false) appearance of being human. In this context Celsus alludes to Plato, “Deceit and lying are in all other cases wrong except only when one uses them as a medicine for friends who are sick and mad in order to heal them, or with enemies when the intention is to escape danger” (4.18).[33] For Celsus, then, the divine deceit at the incarnation was impermissible, because it did not meet the criterion of a justified lie. Origen demurs, arguing that God in fact came to earth as a man precisely to “heal” the human race, so that the incarnation deceit was completely justified.

> Do you not say, Celsus, that sometimes it is allowable to use deceit and lying as a medicine? Why, then, is it unthinkable that something of this sort occurred with the purpose of bringing salvation? … There is nothing wrong if the person who heals sick friends healed the human race which was dear to him with such means as one would not use for choice, but to which he was confined by the force of circumstances. Since the human race was mad, it had to be cured by methods which the Word saw to be beneficial to lunatics. (4.19)

Elsewhere we learn that Origen supported the use of the strategic lie. The passage comes to us from the now-lost *Stromateis*, which fortunately are quoted, in parts, by Jerome. The most relevant portion comes from book six in which, according to Jerome, Origen “tries to adapt our Christian doctrine to the opinions of Plato”[34]:

> To God falsehood is shameful and useless, but to men it is occasionally useful. We must not suppose that God ever lies, even in the way of economy; only, if the good of the hearer requires it, he speaks in ambiguous language, and reveals what he wills in enigmas. … But a man on whom necessity imposes the responsibility of lying is bound to use very great care, and to use falsehood as he would a stimulant or a medicine, and strictly to preserve its measure.

He then instances the sanctioned lies told by the biblical characters of Judith, Esther, and Jacob and concludes: “From all this it is evident that if we speak falsely with any other object than that of obtaining by it some great good, we shall be judged as the enemies of him who said, ‘I am the truth.’”

Jerome, however, attacks this view with a good bit of wit: “[Origen’s] teaching is that the master may lie, but the disciple must not. The inference from this is that the man who is a good liar, and without hesitation sets before his brethren any fabrication which rises into his mouth, shows himself to be an excellent teacher” (*Adv. Rufin*. 1.18).

It is interesting to note, however, that Jerome elsewhere speaks approvingly of the use of Christian deception, in particular with respect to the famous incident in Antioch discussed by Paul in Galatians 2 (the view that prompted Augustine to write *De mendacio*): in Jerome’s well-known position, Peter and Paul did not actually have a falling out. They put on a show, in a double act of dissimulation: Peter “pretended” to be subject to Jewish dietary laws for the sake of the brethren, knowing that he was not really subject to them, and Paul, cognizant of the true state of things, “pretended” to rebuke Peter in order to show the gentile Christians that he was on their side so as to keep from giving offense.[35]

Origen provides a particularly interesting perspective on the permissible lie in his *Commentary on John*, where he is dealing with the historical discrepancies among the canonical Gospels. In his view, the evangelists changed historical data on occasion in order to convey spiritual truths: “For their intention was to speak the truth spiritually and materially at the same time, where that was possible, but where it was not possible in both ways, to prefer the spiritual to the material. The spiritual truth is often preserved in the material falsehood, so to speak” (10.4).[36] As an example of how this works, Origen appeals to the famous instance of Jacob lying, for a good cause, to his blind father Isaac, saying “I am Esau, your first born son.” According to Origen, Jacob “was telling the truth in the spiritual sense … because he had a share of the birthright which was already perishing in his brother.” And this is why contradictory statements about Christ in Scripture can both be true, because they participate in spiritual truths even if they contain material contradictions. Thus Christ can be called both man and not man; he can be both Son and servant.[37]

In addition to these rather abstract disquisitions on lying, we have several anecdotes about prominent church fathers in which, without any qualms, they used deceit when it served their purposes. One of the more amusing, worth quoting in full, involves Athanasius under pursuit, as narrated by Theodoret in

his *Church History* (again, the historicity of the story does not matter for my point, as it shows an attitude toward deceit):

> Moved by these supplications Julian condemned Athanasius not merely to exile, but to death. His people shuddered, but it is related that he foretold the rapid dispersal of the storm, for said he "It is a cloud which soon vanishes away." He however withdrew as soon as he learnt of the arrival of the bearers of the imperial message, and finding a boat on the bank of the river, started for the The-baid. The officer who had been appointed for his execution became acquainted with his flight, and strove to pursue him at hot haste; one of his friends, however, got ahead, and told him that the officer was coming on apace. Then some of his companions besought him to take refuge in the desert, but he ordered the steersman to turn the boat's head to Alexandria. So they rowed to meet the pursuer, and on came the bearer of the sentence of execution, and, said he, "How far off is Athanasius?" "Not far," said Athanasius, and so got rid of his foe, while he himself returned to Alexandria and there remained in concealment for the remainder of Julian's reign. (*H.E*. 3.5)[38]

This is obviously a case where no lie was actually told. The humor of the story resides in the fact that, strictly speaking, Athanasius told the truth. But recall Augustine's view that a lie need not come only in words, but in "signs of whatever kind."

A second and better known account involves an autobiographical tale told by Chrysostom in Book One of *De sacerdotio*, a passage that Paul Griffiths has aptly termed "a hymn of praise to the lie."[39] According to Chrysostom's account, as promising young men, both he and Basil were being pursued in order forcibly to be ordained into the episcopacy. Chrysostom lied to Basil, promising to accept the ordination, and on those grounds Basil relented and did so himself. But Chrysostom did not; it was all a pretext. In its aftermath, Chrysostom engaged in a bit of Schadenfreude, to Basil's dismay: "But when he saw that I was delighted and beaming with joy, and understood that he had been deceived by me, he was yet more vexed and distressed" (1.6).[40]

Basil responds with a bitter lament: "I placed my very life, so to say, in your hands, yet you have treated me with as much guile as if it had been your business to guard yourself against an enemy" (1.7). In response, Chrysostom launches into a kind of encomium to deceit:

> What is the wrong that I have done thee, since I have determined to embark from this point upon the sea of apology? Is it that I misled you and concealed my purpose? Yet I did it for the benefit of thyself who wast deceived, and of those to whom I surrendered you by means of this deceit. For if the evil of deception is absolute, and it is never right to make use of it, I am prepared to pay any penalty you please … But if the thing is not always harmful, but becomes good or bad according to the intention of those who practice it, you must desist from complaining of deceit, and prove that it has been devised against you for a bad purpose. … For a well-timed deception, undertaken with an upright intention, has such advantages, that many persons have often had to undergo punishment for abstaining from fraud. (1.8)

Here we have Cassian's view instantiated and celebrated: lies are not harmful if the intention of the liar is good. Indeed, they are to be used when the circumstances call for it. Chrysostom does not stop there, however, but goes on to speak of two biblical instances of "good" deceit that saved the life of King David (1 Sam 19:12–18; 20:11), and to refer to doctors who employ the medicinal lie: "If any one were to reckon up all the tricks of physicians the list would run on to an indefinite length. And not only those who heal the body but those also who attend to the diseases of the soul may be found continually making use of this remedy" (1.8). He concludes with bold statements that are precisely at odds with the view of an Augustine:

> For great is the value of deceit, provided it be not introduced with a mischievous intention … And often it is necessary to deceive, and to do the greatest benefits by means of this device, whereas he who has gone by a straight course has done great mischief to the person whom he has not deceived. (1.8)[41]

The Morality of Christian Forgery

At the outset of our study we saw that forgery, when it is explicitly discussed in antiquity, is roundly and emphatically condemned. Most readers did not consider this kind of lie to be acceptable, even if they did sanction other lies for other reasons. If someone's life could be saved by a white lie, all to the good (for many Christians); if someone could be delivered from pain and suffering, from rape or torture, then surely (for many Christians), lying could be justified. But

with the literary texts written under the cloud of deceit, we are not dealing with matters of life and death. The issues may have seemed enormous to the writers of these texts. But most readers, at least, condemned the practice. Moreover, unlike fiction, forgery does not include a contract between author and reader where veracity is suspended for the sake of the text. Ancient Christian readers expected authors to name themselves, if they named anyone at all, and not to lie about who they really were.

And so, it is not difficult at all to see what someone standing in Augustine's camp would have thought of forgery. Augustine may well have been speaking for many (most?) other Christians, both of his own day and earlier, when he reflected on the need for Scripture, in particular, not to be implicated in lying and deceit:

> It seems to me that no good at all can come of our believing that the sacred texts contain anything false or incorrect—that is, that these men through whom the Bible was given to us and who committed it to writing set down anything that was not true in those books. It is one question whether a good man might at some time tell a lie, but it is another question altogether whether a writer of Holy Scripture might have intended to lie or deceive. No, it is not another question—it is no question at all. If you can point out at least one instance of the intentional falsehood within this holy citadel of authority, then anything in the Bible which strikes us as too hard to practice, or too difficult to believe in, can simply be explained away as a deliberate untruth. (*Epist*. 28.3)[42]

Or, as he says elsewhere in another letter:

> [I]f it is the case that we admit into Holy Scripture claims which are untrue but which serve some profounder purpose—for the sake of religion, let us say—then how do we defend the authority of the Bible? What statement in the Bible will be strong enough to stand up against the wicked stubbornness of heresy? Anyone arguing with you can claim that in the passage you are citing the writer really intended something else, he had a higher purpose in mind" (*Epist*. 40.3)[43]

This is clearly a hard line when it comes to truth and deceit, and I see no reason

to doubt that a large number of Christians would have agreed with it (whether the majority or not—who can say?). Augustine may have seen himself standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the author of Ephesians, who tells his readers that they are to “Fasten the belt of truth around your waist.” Truth was all-important for this canonical writer. Early on he refers to the gospel as “the word of truth” (1:13); he indicates that the “truth is in Jesus” (4:21); and he declares that the “fruit of the light is found in the truth” (5:9). Most important, as we have seen, he insists that his readers “put aside the lie and speak the truth” to their neighbors (4:25). And yet the author lied about his own identity, claiming to be the apostle Paul when in fact he was someone else, living years later. What would Augustine and those who were like-minded have thought about this author, and his book, had they known the truth of its authorship? They would have called the author a liar and his book a deceit, and they would not have admitted it into the canon of Scripture.

But what did the author himself think? He must have known that he lied. But if he was like a large number of other Christians, he must have also thought that there were times when it was appropriate to lie, that the intention of the lie was more important than the fact of the lie, that sometimes it was the right thing to do to reject truth and embrace falsehood. Most Christians—and undoubtedly this unknown author himself—knew full well that throughout Scripture lies could further and promote the will of God. If Abraham had not lied about his wife Sarah, calling her his sister, he may well have been killed and the nation of Israel would never have come into being (Genesis 12). If Jacob had not deceived Isaac to receive the birthright, Israel would never have become heir of the promises of God (Genesis 27). If the midwives of Egypt had not lied about the hardiness of the Hebrew women giving birth, the nation may well have been destroyed and Moses would certainly never have come into existence (Exodus 1). If Rahab had not lied about the whereabouts of the Israelite spies, Israel may have never been able to take the Promised Land; if they did, she and her family would not have been spared, and she would not have been in the messianic line; in fact the line may well have ended prematurely at that point (Joshua 2). If Michal and Jonathan had not lied for David, he may well have been killed by Saul, before he produced the offspring that would lead to the coming of his greatest Son, the Messiah (1 Samuel 19–20). Jesus too was known to have used deceit, indicating that he was not going to the feast in Jerusalem while knowing full well that he was about to go (John 7). Even God could use deceit when he chose to do so, as declared in forthright terms by the prophet Jeremiah: “You deceived me and I was deceived” (20:7). And as shown, for example, in his declaration through

Jonah that Nineveh was to be destroyed in forty days, when he knew full well that it was not to be.

Did forgers think that lying is sometimes not only right, but divinely sanctioned? That it is sometimes morally acceptable, even necessary, to lie and deceive others? That a greater good can sometimes result from a lie than from the truth? At an early stage of our study we considered the one instance of a Christian forger who discussed his motives for lying about his identity, Salvian of Marseille, who, among other things declared: “For this reason the present writer chose to conceal his identity in every respect for fear that his true name would perhaps detract from the influence of his book, which really contains much that is exceedingly valuable.”[44] He had an important book to write, and no one would read it if it were attributed to a nobody like Salvian. And so he wrote it in the name of Timothy, in hopes that it would have a wide influence.

It may well be that other forgers—of both canonical and non-canonical texts—felt similarly. They may have believed that they had a high moral obligation to convey the truth as it had been revealed to them. They may have reasoned that they needed to have their words read as widely as possible. They may have realized that the best way to assure a broad and much-deserved influence was by hiding their identity behind that of a greater authority. They may have thought that they had a truth to convey, and they may have been willing to lie in order to convey it.

1. For my tally I am including Acts, Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude.

2. See, e.g., pp. 19–20, if one chooses to trust Epiphanius.

3. Translation of M. Atkinson and A. Robinson, *NPNF*, second series, vol. 4.

4. Translation of W. H. Fremantle in *NPNF*, second series, vol. 3.

5. E.g., Basil, *Epist*. 224, 1; Augustine *Epist*. 59.1–2.

6. “Jede Fälschung täuscht einen Sachverhalt vor, der den tatsächlichen Gegebenheiten nicht entspricht. Damit gehört die Fälschung in das Gebiet der Lüge und des Betrugs.… Nur wo Täuschungabsicht, also dolus malus, vorliegt, wird der Tatbestand der Fälschung erfüllt. Insofern gehört die Fälschung zur Lüge, und zwar zur vorsätzlichen Lüge”; *Literarische Fälschung*, pp. 3, 13.

7. If such a thing as “fiction” can be imagined for antiquity. On this, see the next note. In antiquity, of course, there were epic poems, Greek novels (as satirized in Lucian’s “True Story”), epistolary novels, etc., and these *were* read differently from “histories.”

8. For an argument that ancient writers and readers did not have anything that corresponded to our category of “fiction,” see Christopher Gill, “Plato on

Falsehood–Not Fiction," in Gill and Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction*, pp. 38–87. Gill maintains that in modern ways of construing literature, we think of fiction as narrative that is imaginary, "made up" by the author. This is not a category for Plato. When he speaks of the myths being ΨΕΥΔΟΙ, he does not mean that they are made up; he means they teach lessons that are not true. That is Plato's principle category: Does something teach what one needs to learn in order to live rightly? And so he does not contradict himself when he condemns the ΨΕΥΔΟΙ of the poets but then tells his own myths (Er, the Cave, and so on). And when he urges the Noble Lie (which is true). Or when he invents dialogues. None of these things is the absolute embodiment of truth, since that can be reached and conveyed only through dialectical reasoning. But they are pathways to the truth, false in medium and in not being able to convey "truth" in its full and pristine state, but not false because they are made up, invented, imagined. I am in full agreement with this view of Plato. At the same time, it should not be overlooked that ancient persons did recognize that a history of Thucydides was not the same sort of writing as a novel by Achilles Tatius. Nowhere is that clearer than in Lucian's parody of history in his fictional work, "A True Story."

9. "Prologue," Gill and Wiseman, *Lies and Fiction*, p. xvi. Emphasis his.

10. See more fully pp. 43–67.

11. We have seen, for example, the problems with considering the Apostolic Constitutions and 2 Peter as plagiarized, even though they certainly take over other writings wholesale for the production of their own (though not under the author's own name).

12. The New Testament writings were widely falsified by scribes over the centuries, but they do not stand alone. We have seen the interpolations in the Pseudo-Ignatians and the Sibyllina (considering only these in our study, since they are closely related to forgeries in their respective corpora); other instances abound, as, for example, in the writings of Dionysius of Alexandria and Origen.

13. Many fabricated stories are not to be chalked up to malicious intent. But there are numerous episodes from the lives of Jesus that do not pass even ancient standards of veracity, whether stories about Jesus involving a census under Augustus when Quirinius was governor of Syria or involving his mischievous deeds as a five-year-old wunderkind. Stories about the apostles proliferated as well, as we have seen, whether made up as entertainment or for other more ideological reasons, such as Peter and the smoked tuna, Paul and the baptized lion, and John and the obedient bedbugs, just to stick with an animal theme.

14. I have not dealt at any length with false attribution here, even though it affects a number of the writings of the New Testament (the Gospels, 2 and 3 John), not

to mention later writers (Pseudo-Justin, Pseudo-Tertullian, Pseudo-Chrysostom, and on and on). In many instances the attributions may have been made in full cognizance that there were no real grounds for making the ascriptions (the Gospel of Matthew); in other instances they were probably simply made by mistake (Pseudo-Justin).

5. See further pp. 546–47.

6. "Wie bereits bemerkt wurde, macht die Täuschungsabsicht, die jenseits eines literarischen Zwekkes liegt, ein Pseudepigraphon zur Fälschung. Fälschung und Lüge aber stimmen darin überein, daß sie einen wirklichen Sachverhalt verhüllen und den Schein der Wahrheit für einen nicht zutreffenden Tatbestand vortäuschen. Dazu benutzen sie das Mittel der Verstellung. Die literarische Fälschung ist somit ein Sonderfall der Lüge, näherhin des Betruges. Diese Verwandtschaft zwischen literarischer Fälschung und Lüge scheint jedoch weder im Altertum noch in der Neuzeit näher beachtet worden zu sein.… Es ist aber zu fragen, ob im Altertum jede Lüge als unsittlich verurteilt wurde, oder ob hier unterschieden wurde und Täuschung in gewissen Fällen als erlaubt galt"; *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 94

7. For important literature on lying in antiquity, see the classic studies of Franz Schindler, "Die Lüge in der patristischen Literatur," *Beiträge zur Geschichte des christlichen Altertums und der byzantinischen Literatur* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1969; originally published 1922); P. Wenzeslaus Sadok Mackowiak, *Die Ethische Beurteilung der Notlüge in der altheidnischen, patristischen, scholastischen, und neueren Zeit* (Zolkiew: Verlag der Dominakamer, 1933); Gregor Müller, *Die Wahrhaftigkeitspflicht und die Problematik der Lüge: Ein Längsschnitt durch die Moraltheologie und Ethik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Tugendlehre des Thomas von Aquin und der modernen Lösungsversuche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1962). In addition, see David Satran, "Pedagogy and Deceit in the Alexandrian Theological Tradition," in *Origeniana Quinta* ed. R. J. Daly (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 119–24; Boniface Ramsey, "Two Traditions on Lying and Deception in the Ancient Church," *Thom*. 49 (1985): 504–33; and the studies cited in n. 18.

8. There are a number of important studies of Augustine's view of lying, all of them eclipsed by Paul J. Griffiths, *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004). See also Alan Brinton, "St. Augustine and the Problem of Deception in Religious Persuasion," *RelS* 19 (1983): 437–50; Marcia L. Colish, "The Stoic Theory of Verbal Signification and the Problem of Lies and False Statements from Antiquity to St. Anselm," in *L'Archéologie de Signe*, ed. L. Brind'amour and E. Vance (Toronto: Institut

Pontifical d'Etudes Médiévales, 1983), pp. 17–43; Thomas D. Feehan, "Augustine on Lying and Deception," *AugStud* 19 (1988): 131–39; Feehan, "The Morality of Lying in St. Augustine," *AugStud* 21 (1990): 67–81; and Feehan, "Augustine's Own Examples of Lying," *AugStud* 22 (1991): 165–90.

9. Translation of Mary Muldowny, *Augustine: Treatises on Various Subjects* FC, 16 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1952). All subsequent quotations of both this work and the *Contra mendacium* will be from this translation.

0. Griffiths, *Lying*, p. 25.

1. Ibid., p. 31.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

3. *Institutions* 6:18; translation of Mary Francis Macdonald, *Lactantius, The Divine Institutions*, FC (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 1964).

4. Translation of Edwin Hamilton Gifford (1903 tr.).

5. Speyer, *Literarische Fälschung*, p. 96; Brox, *Falsche Verfasserangaben*, pp. 83–104. See pp. 132–37 above.

6. Translation of Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Conferences* (ACW; New York: Newman Press, 1997). All quotations of this work will be taken from this edition.

7. Among a host of studies, see esp. T. P. Wiseman, "Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity," in Gills and Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction*, pp. 122–46; Christopher Gill, "Plato on Falsehood"; Jane S. Zembaty, "Plato's Republic and Greek Morality on Lying," *JHP* 26 (1988): 517–45.

8. Translation of E. C. Marchant and O. J. Todd, *Xenophon*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1923).

9. Translation of Paul Shorey, *Plato*; LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1937).

0. Gill, "Plato on Falsehood," pp. 53, 55.

1. *The Philoctetes of Sophocles*. Edited with introduction and notes by Sir Richard Jebb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898).

2. Translation in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson *ANF*, vol. 2.

3. Translation of Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*.

4. Jerome, *Adv. Rufin*. 1.18.

5. Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians* ad loc. See his Epistle 112 to Augustine. I owe this reference to Maria Doerfler. See also Chrysostom's *Homily* 2 on Galatians. I owe this reference to Andrew Jacobs.

6. Translation of Ronald Heine, *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel of John 1–10*, FC (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1989).

7. See also Origen's *Homilies* on Jeremiah, 19.15 and 20.3, where he strains to explain Jer. 20:7: "You have deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived."

8. Translation of Blomfield Jackson, *NPNF*, series 2, vol. 3.

9. Griffiths, *Lying*, p. 135.

0. Translation taken from W. R. W. Stephens in *NPNF*, series 1, vol. 7.

1. For divinely sanctioned use of deceit in the early Christian tradition, one need only think of the bizarre crucifixion scene narrated, or so we're told by Irenaeus, in the Gospel of Basilides, where Jesus, having pulled an identity switch with Simon of Cyrene, stands by and laughs while the Romans crucify the wrong man. The theme is reprised in the Pseudo-Clementines in the fateful switch of identity that Simon effects with Faustianus, a move that seriously backfires thanks to the clever intervention and manipulation of Peter.

2. Translation of Joseph W. Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), p. 259.

3. Trigg, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 263.

4. See the discussion on pp. 94–96.

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